**Characters**

SATAN

GLORIA

MOTHER TERESA

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

SAINT MATTHEW

LORETTA

MARY MAGDALENE

BAILIFF (JULIUS OF OUTER MONGOLIA)

SIMON THE ZEALOT

SIGMUND FREUD

SAINT THOMAS

PONTIUS PILATE

UNCLE PINO

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE

SAINT PETER

JESUS OF NAZARETH

JUDAS ISCARIOT

SAINT MONICA

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

SISTER GLENNA

BUTCH HONEYWELL

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

SOLDIERS

**Act 1: Domine Adiuva Incredulitatem Meam**

ACT 1 "DOMINE ADIUVA INCREDULITATEM MEAM"

*Darkness. Rain. From nowhere, a woman emerges from her past.*

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

No parent should have to bury a child . . . No mother should have to bury a son. Mothers are not meant to bury sons. It is not in the natural order of things.

I buried my son. In a potter's field. In a field of Blood. In empty, acrid silence. There was no funeral. There were no mourners. His friends all absent. His father dead. His sisters refusing to attend. I discovered his body alone, I dug his grave alone, I placed him in a hole, and covered him with dirt and rock alone. I was not able to finish burying him before sundown, and I'm not sure if that affected his fate . . .

I begrudge God none of this. I do not curse him or bemoan my lot. And though my heart keeps beating only to keep breaking — I do not question why.

I remember the morning my son was born as if it was yesterday. The moment the midwife placed him in my arms, I was infused with a love beyond all measure and understanding. I remember holding my son, and looking over at my own mother and saying, "Now I understand why the sun comes up at day and the stars come out at night. I understand why rain falls gently. Now I understand you, Mother" . . .

I loved my son every day of his life, and I will love him ferociously long after I've stopped breathing. I am a simple woman. I am not bright or learn-ed. I do not read. I do not write. My opinions are not solicited. My voice is not

important . . . On the day of my son's birth I was infused with a love beyond all measure and understanding . . . The world tells me that God is in Heaven and that my son is in Hell. I tell the world the one true thing I know: If my son is in Hell, then there is no Heaven — because if my son sits in Hell, *there is no God.*

JESUS, *carrying a bucket, has approached the woman. He kisses her cheek. She does not notice. They vanish.*

*A courtroom. Court is in session. A woman with wings*, GLORIA, *rises.*

GLORIA

Between Heaven and Hell — there is another place. This place: Hope. Hope — is located right over here in downtown Purgatory.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Next case!*

GLORIA

Now, Purgatory, contrary to popular belief, has plumbing, and bodegas, and they even got a movie theater and a little park that people can walk their dogs at. Hope — well it ain't got none a that, and it definitely don't smell good.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Next case, Bailiff!*

GLORIA

I worked here in Hope for two and a half years — thass how I got these wings. And I wouldn't trade nothing for these wings — I can fly with these wings! At night, I fly down to Earth, and I watch my littlest Babyboy sleep. He's seven, and he's got a picture of me on his wall — right in between Shaquille O'Neal and the Incredible Hulk. Then, I go fly uptown to the window of my oldest Babygirl's house and watch my granchild, Little Bit, sleep. Most nights I can see my oldest Babygirl, Tanya, with her feet in a pot of hot water, always studying books; and I'll stick around to see her man, Winston, come home late at night from work,

always with a muffin or a hamburger for my Babygirl. Winston's love for my Babygirl is all over his face — I was wrong about him, I always thought he was shifty . . . When I get back to Heaven, I tell my husband, DeLayne, all about it. DeLayne don't like to fly, but he likes to hear the stories, and he likes how I look like when I come home from Earth all "windblown" . . . Now Hope, it changes with the times, but has stood always as God's gift to the last of his children. It is said that every civilization rearranges the cosmic furniture differently. In biblical times, Hope was an Oasis in the Desert. In medieval days, a shack free of Plague. Today, Hope is no longer a place for contemplation — litigation being the preferred new order of the day.
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Where's my damn bailiff??!!*

BAILIFF

Here, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Then call the next damn case!!!*

BAILIFF

Yes, sir. *"God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Thorseen the Implacable: Motion to appeal"!*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Denied — Next case!*

BAILIFF

*"God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Henry Wayne Masters — "*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Nope!*

BAILIFF

*"God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Benedict Arnold — "*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Aw, hell, no!*

BAILIFF

*"God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Judas Iscariot — "*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*— "Judas Iscariot"??!! Who brings this crap before me??!!*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, my name is Fabiana Aziza Cunningham —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

— Never heard of you!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I live in Purgatory.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Well you shoulda kept your legs closed! *Motion denied! Next case!*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, I have a writ signed by Saint Peter at the Gates of Heaven!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Next case!*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But I have a writ!

BAILIFF

She has a writ, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Excuse me?!

BAILIFF

Just saying: The lady, she's got a writ, so, I mean —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

— Bailiff: let's set up a little *signal* between the two of us, okay?

BAILIFF

Okay.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Good. Now, when I come to court dressed as Ethel Merman in a one-piece bathing suit, that'll be my *signal* to you that I want your *opinion!*

BAILIFF

Yes, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Next case!!*

BAILIFF

But what about the writ, sir?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

What's your name, Bailiff?!

BAILIFF

Julius of Outer Mongolia.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

You're on work-release from Purgatory, Julius — correct?

BAILIFF

Yes, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Wanna get to Heaven someday? Eat fried chicken and mashed potatoes, feel the sun on your face.

BAILIFF

Very much, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Then call the next damn case!!!*

BAILIFF

Yes, sir. Absolutely, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Good. Have a lollipop.

BAILIFF

Thank you, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Next case!

BAILIFF

But, like, the writ, sir —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Bailiff!!!!!!!!*

YUSEF AKBAR WAHID AL-NASSAR GAMEL EL-FAYOUMY *risesdramatically from his seat in the courtroom.*
YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Your Honor, if I may?!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Who speaks before me?!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

It is I, Yusef Akbar Wahid Al-Nassar Gamel El-Fayoumy!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Who the hell are you?!*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

An attorney, great sir! Willing and able to prosecute this sham of a case and defend the Gates of Heaven and the Kingdom of God against this big shenanigan of a so-called writ, great handsome sir! Look no further, Your Honor! Yusef Akbar Wahid Al-Nassar Gamel El-Fayoumy is a *beacon* for justice!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

A "beacon," eh?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

May I approach you?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*The bench, not me!*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

The bench! Of course! YES! — And it is a lovely bench, splendid and sturdy like the great derrière that rests upon it!! Your Honor, I received wind of this so-called "writ" several weeks ago. I have been preparing night and day to refute the allegations it contains!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, let the record reflect I have no opposition to Mr˙ El-Fayoumy here.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*(to* CUNNINGHAM *)*

*Speak when spoken to!!!*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Do not bait this great man, lady! He presided over the appeal of Attila the Hun when you were nothing more than a cheap shot of whiskey on your great-great-grandfather's first unpaid bar tab!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Well said!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Forgive the outburst.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

. . . You got a license to practice, Mr˙ El-Fajita?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

A license? A license! Yes. Absolutely!! Submitted for your most scrupulously discerning approval, eminently great sir!

EL-FAYOUMY *crosses, fumbles, searching his pockets for the license.*

BAILIFF

*(cautiously)*

Sir, his name's El-Fa *youmy.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

What?

BAILIFF

You called him El-Fajita.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Just gimme my glasses!

BAILIFF

You're wearing them, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*(exploding)*

My *other* glasses!!!!!!!!!

BAILIFF

Oh. Here.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Most worshipful lord and master: very tiny problem. My license, I seem to have left it in my other suit. I could rush back to Hell and retrieve it —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

From Hell are you?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Temporarily detained — a problem with my papers.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

You sure about that?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Quite sure, your grace. I attribute the mix-up to the Americanization of the afterlife — completely understandable in lieu of recent events.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

You're damn right.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes, your eminence — as are you, great sir!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Cunningham! Let me see this "writ."

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Here, Your Honor.

JUDGE *reads the writ.*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*(an aside)*

You have great legs, Fabiana. Free for dinner, perhaps?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Cunningham! This writ is garbage! *Nextcase!*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, my client —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Your client is Judas Iscariot! Your client sold out the son of God, for Chrissakes!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, that has no bearing —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Cunningham — Judas Iscariot committed the one unforgivable sin. Everybody knows it —

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

— The sin of despair!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

And then he did the world a favor and hung himself!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

From the olive branch, the coward!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Next case!!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, that writ you hold in your hand is signed by Saint Peter!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

I know Peter, and he's prone to error, believe me. And he's rash —

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Rash! Absolutely! A little place called the Garden of Gethsemane ring a bell, Fabiana? When the authorities came to arrest Jesus — after *your client* sold him out with a kiss — what did Peter do?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I know what he did.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*Well, know it again!!* Peter took out his sword and started chopping off the ears of the authority! Can you imagine?! Jesus had to correct him, put the ears back on — it was a big mess, really.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Next case!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But Your Honor —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Next case!!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Come Fabiana: dinner and a sensual massage — it will soothe you —

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

— Your Honor, I cite the Beatitudes, and Kierkegaard. I cite Christ on the Cross!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

I cite my foot in your ass, Cunningham!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I cite Hegel: Within every idea — *thesis* — is

contained its contradiction — *antithesis* — and out of that struggle is created — *synthesis.* Synthesis, Your Honor! The Union of Opposites — their interdependence and their inevitable clash producing what's next — what must be revealed: God's Perfect Love versus God's Rightful Justice equals what, Your Honor?
JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Out of my courtroom!!!*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

The synthesis of Love and Justice can produce only Mercy and Forgiveness, Your Honor! If a just God sits in Heaven, it can fall no other way!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Next case!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But Your Honor —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Next case! NEXT CASE NEXT CASE NEXT CASE!!!!!*

*The gavel bangs. Blackout.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*(sotto voce)*

Crazy Mick Bitch.

*In darkness, we hear voices, noises, and portentous rumblings like an earthquake. Lights flash.*

VOICE OF ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

All right now, people! — Cue them trumpets and the dancing camels!

*The sounds of trumpets and dancing camels are heard. Music and wild lights.*

SAINT MONICA

Thanks, boys!

Hey, y'all. Welcome to my world . . . So this is the part of the story, where, if it wasn't for me, there wouldn't be no more parts to the fuckin' story, okay? My name is MONICA — better known to you mere mortals as SAINT

Monica. Yeah, dass right, SAINT — as in "better not don't get up in *my* grill 'cuz I'll mess your shit up, 'cuz I'm a Saint and I got mad saintly connects," okay? You ever drove down Santa Monica Boulevard? You ever ate some sushis down the Santa Monica Pier? Well dass *my* boulevard and *my* pier, and dass all I gotta say about that — word to the wise, word is most definitely B-O-N-D bond . . . Anyways

(lemme catch my breaf)

Anyways, up in Heaven, a lotta peoples don't wanna hang with me 'cuz they say I'm a Nag. It's true. And you know what I say about that? I say: "Fuck them bitches," 'cuz — you know what — I *am* a Nag, and if I wasn't a Nag, I wouldn't never made it to be no Saint, and the church wouldn't a had no Father of the Church named Saint Augustine — 'cuz I birthed the mothahfuckah, raised him, and when he started messin' up, like, all the time and constantly, I nagged God's ass to save him! I nagged and nagged and nagged and nagged till God got so tired of my shit that he did save my son, and my son — Saint Augustine — he stopped bangin' whores and sippin' on some wine and he became learn-ed, so fuckin' learn-ed that he's known as one of the Fathers of the Church, and you could look that shit up! Go ahead, look it up right now, I'll wait! . . . Dass right: "Father Up In This Mothahfuckah"! "Father of the Church" — got a plaque and everything! So if I hadn't been a Nag, All a Y'all niggas woulda been a bastard church, so, sip on dat, bitches! . . . Anyways

(lemme catch my breaf)

okay: As a result of my reputation of having God's ear, a lotta mothahfuckahs pray to me — I have three full-time assistants just to sift through it all. Long story short, I was axed to look into the case of Judas Iscariot by this Irish Gypsy lawyer bitch in Purgatory named Cunningham. She wanted me to do some naggin' to God on Judas's behalf, and, quite frankly, I was impressed by *her* nagging abilities — 'cuz that

bitch nagged my ass day and night for forty days . . . But I don't nag for juss any anybody, and I definitely don't nag for no mothahfuckah I don't know, so, I went down to check out Judas for my own self —

*And now she is with* JUDAS.

*(To audience)*

He looked fuckin' retarded, he wouldn't talk or nuthin'. He didn't seem to hear me, and I'm not someone who has a problem expressing myself. I figured he was fakin', so I did this:

*(To* JUDAS *)*

Yo, Judas! . . . Judas! . . . Yo, You Deaf, mothahfuckah? . . . Judas, yo! . . .

*(To audience)*

I smacked the bitch around a little.

MONICA *slaps, kicks, shoves.*

Yo, Helen Keller! Yo, wake up! . . . Don't front — I know you could hear me . . .

*(To audience)*

Then I started snappin' on his ass.

*(To* JUDAS *)*

Yo, Judas, you got change for thirty pieces of silver, mothahfuckah?! . . . Yo, Judas, how much you pay for that haircut? — thirty pieces of silver?! Yo Judas, why you so "hung" up? C'mon, let's "hang" out. C'mon, bitch, go out on a "limb"! You want a "olive"? C'mon mothahfuckah, have a "olive." Wanna go to the "Olive Garden" restaurant? Day got good "Olive Oil" there . . . Ah-aight, fine, come on, Judas, whaddya say you an' me go down to the bar and — betray some mothahfuckahs! Whaddya say?! I know you like betraying! What's up, you ain't in the mood to betray today?! Ah-aight, mothahfuckah, we can just "hang"?! Get it? Hang?! Get it?! Do you get it?! . . . Wassamatter?! Hungry?! How 'bout some

supper?! You want some supper, mothahfuckah?! C'mon, one last supper, whaddya say?!

*(To audience)*

I couldn't break him. So I sat down next to him.

*She sits.*

I sat with Judas Iscariot for three days. Then, on the night of the third day, sumpthin' happened. While I was restin' my vocal chords, I saw sumpthin' unexpected. I saw a single tear fall out Judas's eye. Just one. When the tear hit the ground, I saw it was red like a ruby. I looked into his eyes, like this:

*She looks into* JUDAS' *s eyes.*

He couldn't look at me. Or he looked through me. I couldn't tell. His eyes was empty. He barely breathed. He was like a catatonic statue of a former human being. And I detected sadness in him. Paralyzing, immobilizing, overwhelming sadness. His sadness ran through him like a river that had frozen up and died and no one lived there no more. After a while, I didn't know what else to do, so I thought I'd just hold him in my arms for like a minute, warm him up before I left.

*She cradles* JUDAS *in her arms. Beat.*

I held him in my arms for four days. On the third day, I remembered how Jesus had said that God has the biggest love for the least of his creatures — and Judas was the leastest creature I had ever seen. On the fourth day, Judas dropped another single tear. It was clear-colored this time and it evaporated into the earth on impact. He trembled briefly,

then froze up again . . . I had seen enough. I took off my outer garments and left them for him so he could smell something human. I collected my tears in a bucket and poured it on his face so he could taste the salt. Then I went back home and got on the horn to God. I dialed direct, yo. Some people call it being a Nag, I call it doing my Job. I got a calling, y'all — you should try giving me a shout if ya ever need it, 'cuz my name is Saint Monica, I'm the mother of Saint Augustine, one of the Fathers of the Church, and ya know what? My

ass gets results!

*A gavel bangs.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Next case*!

BAILIFF

*"God and the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth versus Judas Iscariot"*!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Bailiff!!!!!

BAILIFF

She got a writ signed by God, sir.

SAINT MONICA

*Signed, Sealed, Delivered, mothahfuckah! Peace!!*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Here is the writ, Your Honor — note the signature at the bottom.

SAINT MONICA *and* JUDAS *vanish.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Bailiff!! Bailiff!! Where's El-Fajita?

EL-FAYOUMY *rises with panache.*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Present and accounted for and dripping with anticipation to defend with marvelous cunning and great relish the Kingdom of Heaven and Earth and your great sir-ness against the Satan-spawned traitor Judas Iscariot and

his beguiling but outlandishly misguided counsel, most eminently great and rakishly handsome great sir!!!

*Beat.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*(re: the writ)*

Cunningham, I do not like it when lawyers go over my head.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You gave me no choice.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*Objection, Your Honor!!!* As human beings, we always have choice! Motion to strike!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Mr˙ El-Fajita, you are aware that the trial hasn't actually begun yet, right?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Uh . . . Yes . . . Right. Of course. I was merely, uh . . . Yes, sir . . .

EL-FAYOUMY *sheepishly sits.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

"Fabiana" "Aziza" "Cunningham," that right?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

It is.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

So where's the red hair and freckles, Cunningham?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

My mother was a Romanian Gypsy who settled in Vinegar Hill in Harlem in the 1960s.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

And your father?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

A local parish priest.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Got more than his palm read, did he? All right, then, Cunningham, I think it only fair at this juncture to tell you some things about myself, things that may, perhaps, inspire you to take your little mission elsewhere. For example, I strongly dislike Tapioca Pudding —

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*(rising)*

Tapioca, the worst, I spit on it!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Siddown!!

*(to CUNNINGHAM)*

But even more than Tapioca, Cunningham, I dislike the following: Defense Attorneys as a rule, half-breeds in general, and Judas Iscariot as anything other than a cautionary tale. Now that a problem for you?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

No.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

You ever met God, Cunningham?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I don't know that I believe in God.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

You've just handed me a writ signed by Him, and, yet, you don't know if you believe?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Correct.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Well, what if God appeared to you, Cunningham? Just one day, boom! God: White Beard, Flowing Robe, The Whole Rack a Lamb.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

What if you were to go home tonight, Cunningham, and Jesus Christ himself were to greet you at your door with a dozen Krispy Kremes and a quart of cold milk and say: "Cunningham. Fabiana. It's me. I really am that thing that you've always feared more than doubted" — what would you do?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

And what if you let him in, Cunningham, and you sat down with The Man for just, say, three minutes? And you could touch him and inspect him and interrogate him all you want and have him do miracles and tell you the exact story of your life, and you ended up convinced — convinced, Cunningham — wiping away tears of joy and relief on your living-room couch. If he *proved* it to you, Cunningham, would you believe then?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

If he proved it, I suppose I would have to.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

After only three minutes?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But that would never happen —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Cunningham, you're the cynical, faithless spawn of a Crackpot Gypsy and a Defrocked Mick — yet you just told me Jesus would have you on your knees in three minutes.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

So?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

So consider this: Your friend Judas? He had Jesus for three *years*! Think about that, Cunningham. Three years in the foxhole with the best friend ya ever had, then he shot him in the back for a pack of Kools. Think what that says about the essential character of the man. Now go home and stir *that* into your wee Gypsy teapot! *Petition's invalid, Motion denied! Next case!*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Pure genius! I am erect!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, this petition is signed by *God!*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Yeah, but it ain't signed by your client, now, is it?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

My client is catatonic, he's incapable of signing.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

If he's catatonic, then how do you know he wants an appeal in the first place?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Who couldn't want to appeal "eternal damnation"?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Someone who was aware of his own self-inflicted erosion of the capacity to be filled by Grace . . . Someone too prideful to ask for forgiveness even in the face of the fiery furnace. Or maybe, he don't bother askin', 'cuz he knows he don't deserve it!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, the only person who *needs* forgiveness is the one who doesn't deserve it.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Then let him ask!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I'm asking for him!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Out of my courtroom, sister, and may God have mercy on your blasted arrogant soul!* Now get thee back Uptown, woman. Stop your rabble-rousing, and get

humble — 'cuz you ain't gonna get to Heaven by trying to dismantle the Natural Order of Things that the good lord has so thoughtfully put together!!!
FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, are you a citizen of Heaven?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Bailiff! Remove this woman!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You live here with us — you know no more about God's Law than anyone else in this court!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

My papers are pending — I'll be up there any day now.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your papers have been pending since 1864, Your Honor, that's a hundred and forty years —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

— If there's an insinuation at the end of that statement, Cunningham, I suggest you don't make it!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Not an insinuation, Your Honor, but a question: If the "truth" really does set us free, then what is it, Your Honor, that is progressively precluding your capacity to respond to the call of that truth? Because "a hundred and forty years" suggests to me that you are moving not closer, but farther and farther away from it every day!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

What the hell does "Judas Iscariot" have to do with my truth, Cunningham? I didn't hang myself from some olive branch!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Not from an olive branch, but on a battlefield in northern Georgia in 1864. Allatoona. And the tree — Oak, I believe. Your Honor, I have to wonder what your honest answer will be, when you are someday asked how different you are now from that day when you died?

*An uncomfortable pause.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

. . . Tomorrow morning. Nine a˙m˙ That work for you?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

It does.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*(to* BAILIFF *)*

Put it on the docket.

BAILIFF

Docket?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Just write it down!

BAILIFF

Um . . .

BAILIFF *takes out a pen and scribbles on his hand.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Anything else, Fabiana Aziza Cunningham?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

No, Your Honor.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*Next fuckin' Case!!!!!!!*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Fear not, your grace, I shall slay this fallen woman as the crocodile slays the one-legged newt!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*NEXT CASE NEXT CASE NEXT CASE NEXT CASE!!*

*The gavel bangs.* GLORIA *and* LORETTA, *wearing a hospital gown, appear.*

GLORIA

Very little is actually known about Judas Iscariot — Oh! this is my fellow jury member Loretta. On earth, she's currently on Life Support.

LORETTA

Hi, Hello!

GLORIA

Have they figured out whether you comin' or goin' yet?

LORETTA

Not really. "Any day now," they say.

GLORIA *takes a peek around.*

GLORIA

*(conspiratorially)*

Say, Loretta — you smoke cigarettes?

LORETTA

Well, not unconscious on a respirator.

GLORIA

Yeah but — you got one for me?

LORETTA

Maybe in my clutch. Oh. Here.

LORETTA *produces a cigarette.*

GLORIA

Oh snap — Newports?! Oh, you my girl now! You got a light?

LORETTA

*(producing a lighter)*

It's a NASCAR lighter.

GLORIA

*(uninterested)*

Mmmm-hmmm.

*She lights her cigarette, inhales.*

*(To audience)*

So anyways — about Judas, not a lot is known except that he was chosen to be an Apostle, he betrayed Jesus, and then he hung his-self. Not a lot to go on — especially when we're meant to rely on facts.

LORETTA

You know, I had an uncle — can I say this?

GLORIA

Go ahead.

LORETTA

*(addressing the audience)*

When I was a little girl, my drunk uncle Pino, he used to like to go around saying:

UNCLE PINO *appears.*

UNCLE PINO

"I believe, because it is absurd! It is certain because it is impossible!"

UNCLE PINO *vanishes.*

GLORIA

What did he mean by that?

LORETTA

No clue . . . But I think —

BUTCH HONEYWELL *enters.*

BUTCH HONEYWELL

Ladies, we're back.

GLORIA

*(to audience)*

Oh wait — hold up!

GLORIA *snaps her fingers dramatically and both* BUTCH *and* LORETTA *freeze in time.*

Now that's Butch Honeywell: and unlike Loretta, he definitely dead. And also unlike Loretta, he got no real interest in finding that out.

GLORIA *snaps her fingers again and* BUTCH *and* LORETTA *unfreeze.*

So Butch, did we miss anything in there?
BUTCH HONEYWELL

Oh, just some crap about the essential paradox of man: How we refuse to juxtapose the absolute to the relative, and some other some-such about paradox as an ontological definition which expresses the relation between an existing cognitive spirit and eternal truth — You know, bullshit.

Listen, they passed out the lunch menus — I ordered you guys the Combo Club with Fritters.

LORETTA

Fritters: awesome! Thanks, Butch.

BUTCH HONEYWELL

Right this way, ladies.

*The gavel bangs.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Next witness!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Great Magnificent Sir! The Prosecution now calls Henrietta Iscariot, mother to Judas Iscariot, to the stand!

BAILIFF

State your name, ma'am.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

Henrietta Iscariot.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes . . . Good day, Miss Iscariot.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

Good day.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes . . . Well . . . I can't help but notice, Miss

Iscariot, that you are a very well-built woman — would it be fair to say "your cup runneth over"?
HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

Um, all the Iscariots are buxom, if that's what you mean?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*My meaning exactly!!* Now then: can you recall if Judas Iscariot as an infant was prone to steal more than his fair share of milk from your deliciously well-apportioned bosom?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

I can't recall that. No.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Very well, but can you recall . . . *this!!!* I take you back to the year eight. You were a single parent raising many children, Judas being your eldest, and the man of the family. You sent him out fishing to get food for you and his poor starving sisters. What happened next?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

*(to* JUDGE LITTLEFIELD *)*

Do I have to answer?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Just tell the truth, ma'am.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

Well, Judas didn't come home till very late. I waited by the fire. I was worried, he was only eight. I was concerned that maybe the Romans had detained him for shoplifting again —

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

A shoplifter! So please the court!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

But then he came home.

JUDAS *crosses, sits on floor. He is eight.*

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Hi Mommy.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

Judas! I was so worried.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Look what I got, Mommy! A spinning top!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

Judas, did you catch any fish? Your sisters are weeping with hunger —

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Weeping, your great sir! Weeping and Wailing!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I caught five fish, Mommy!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

But where are they?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I sold them in the market and bought this spinning top. Look how it spins, Mommy!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

Judas Iscariot, I am ashamed of you!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

But Mommy —

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

— *Selfish boy, you will come to no good!!!*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

" *Selfish boy, you will come to no good*," was that your statement at that time?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

He was only eight!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Eight — and too late!!! Nothing further, great sir!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Cross?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

No, thank you.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

I wasn't asking you.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Miss Iscariot, what happened the next day?

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

Well, he ran away from home that night, and I searched for him all day. Late in the afternoon, I observed the following:

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE, *a sad-looking boy, crosses to* JUDAS, *who is spinning his top, alone.*

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

Hi.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Hi.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

Hi.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

. . . My name's Judas. What's yours?

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

Matthias of Galilee.

MATTHIAS OF GALILEE *sits.*

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Hey, I got an idea: Why don't you go home and get your spinning top, and then, when you get back with your spinning top, we can play battle of the spinning tops?

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

I don't got a spinning top.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Oh.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

I wish I had a spinning top, all my friends got one except me.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Yeah, that's rough. I used to not have one, too.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

All the kids, they call me "sissypants" 'cuz I don't got no spinning top.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

You should ask your mommy to buy you one.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

I don't got a mommy.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Ask your daddy then.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

I got a daddy, but he's very stern. He don't believe in spinning tops, so I can't never get one.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Wow.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

You prolly think I'm a sissypants, too.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

No. Hey man — don't cry.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

It's just very hard to get through life without a spinning top, you know?

*Beat.*

JUDAS ISCARIOT

You . . . You wanna try mine?

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

For real?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Here.

MATTHIAS *spins the spinning top, and his mood immediately improves.*

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

Wow! Nobody in Galilee's got a spinning top like this — this is a wicked cool spinning top, Judas.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I picked it out myself.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

Boy oh boy, your father must really love you to buy you such a most definitely dope spinning top as this!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

My father's dead.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

What???!!!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

The Romans kilt him.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

*(in one breath)*

Yeah? The Romans, they took all our goats last month and now we don't have no money for nothing, even food, and so my father makes me go to the butcher and ask for bones for my dog but I don't have a dog and the butcher knows I don't have a dog, but he gives me the bones 'cuz he takes pity on me and then I give them to my father and he makes soup for us with the bones and we eat it and it tastes really bad and my grandmoms says my father's pride is wounded 'cuz he can't earn no money 'cuz the Romans took our goats and that's why everything's messed up and I can't have no spinning top or nothing . . . Uh-oh!!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

What?

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

I bettah go home now. I have to be home before six. My father's very stern.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Oh. Okay.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

Thank you for letting me play with your spinning top, Judas. Maybe someday my daddy'll get some more goats and then I'll get a spinning top, and then I'll come back and play spinning tops with you, and we can play spinning tops and stuff, 'cuz that was really fun.

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

The sad boy started to leave, then:

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Wait.

*(Pause.)*

Here.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

What?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

You can have it.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

I can have your spinning top?!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Yeah.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

For real?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Yeah.

MATTHAIS OF GALILEE

Wow — ee Zow — ee!!! Dag! Thank you, Judas!

MATTHIAS *kisses* JUDAS *on the cheek, exits.*

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

When people ask me who my son was, I tell them that story.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Thank you, Miss Iscariot. The witness is excused.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Not so fast! Miss Iscariot, your son was picked up by the Roman Authorities the very next day, on a charge of stealing *a blind man's staff*, correct? A Blind man's staff that he then pawned to Omar the Baker to purchase, it says here:

"cotton candy and a royal-blue spinning top," correct?!

Correct?! . . . Is that correct, Miss Iscariot?!

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

I don't know, it was so long ago —

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*Speak into the microphone!!!!!!!*

HENRIETTA ISCARIOT

There is no microphone.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. This is true . . . Uh, Your Honor, we have reason to believe that The Staff Deprived Blind Man in question was later run over by a rabid Judean Camel. Here is the death certificate. No further questions.

*Gavel bangs.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Next witness!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes! Great, wise Sir: Prosecution calls the incomparable Mother Teresa to the stand!

MOTHER TERESA *hobbles up to the stand with a cane. She's old, but tough. She wears her signature sari, and a cross around her neck. She can hear hardly at all.*

BAILIFF

Name.

MOTHER TERESA

Did you say something?

BAILIFF

Name?

MOTHER TERESA

What?

BAILIFF

Your name, please, ma'am?

MOTHER TERESA

Oh. Jess.

*(She checks her watch)*

Ten forty-five. Okay?

BAILIFF

Uhh. . .

EL-FAYOUMY *takes charge.*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Mother Teresa: Hello. Over here!

MOTHER TERESA

Who's dat?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Hello. It is I, Mother. Remember me?

MOTHER TERESA

Oh, jess. Handsome Boy! Hello.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. Hello. How are you?

MOTHER TERESA

Speak louder, boy.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*(much louder)*

*I said, "How are you?"*

MOTHER TERESA

What?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*(very, very loud)*

*I SAID, "HOW. . .ARE. . . YOU?"*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Uh, Judge, Bailiff — I believe we do have a hearing device for Mother Teresa?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*(to* BAILIFF *)*

Get the device.

BAILIFF

I believe you have the device, sir.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

What?! Here.

BAILIFF *takes a large set of earphones, hands them to* MOTHER TERESA.

BAILIFF

Ma'am, put these on, ma'am?

MOTHER TERESA

What?

BAILIFF *puts the earphones on* MOTHER TERESA *'s head.*

MOTHER TERESA

Oh. Thank you, giant man.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. Hello Mother! Yes. Can you hear me now?

MOTHER TERESA

Jess.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*(much softer)*

How about now?

MOTHER TERESA

Jess.

EL-FAYOUMY *now simply mimes speaking.*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

How about that?

MOTHER TERESA

. . . You are tricking me, no?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes! Yes! I was tricking!

MOTHER TERESA

*(playfully)*

Bad boy.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*(playing back)*

Very bad! A scandal! Yes! I know.

EL-FAYOUMY *and* MOTHER TERESA *titter.*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, if Prosecution is through flirting with the beatified iconic virgin, we could, perhaps, begin?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

El-Fayoumy, contact has been established — let's get on with it now, shall we?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Without further hesitation, your grace. Forgive the delay, I was simply enamored to be in her beatific presence, your eminence. I love Mother Teresa, great one. In Christian Egypt, she is a great star — as a young boy, I used to don a towel and my mother's nightgown and stalk the back streets of Cairo looking for dying things to comfort and salve. Yes.

EL-FAYOUMY *has become a little emotional.*

*(To MOTHER TERESA)*

Mother! I love you, really. You are the Oasis! You are the Light!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Do we need to take a moment here, counselor?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*(dabbing his eyes)*

Yes. Yes, Your Honor. Perhaps we do.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Five minute recess! Adjourned.

*Gavel bangs.*

*Lights cross-fade to* SAINT PETER *and* SAINT MATTHEW *sitting in a quiet place up above.*

SAINT PETER

My name is Peter. They got a Basilica named after me in Rome, which is ironic, 'cuz, back in the day, if you even said the word "Rome" in my presence — more than likely I'd a beat you with my stick. I even had a standing rule on my fishing boat that was strictly enforced: "Talk about Rome, and your ass can swim home

alone." I had to have those kinda rules laid down strong 'cuz my younger brother Drew and his friends — they liked to waste their time talkin' about overthrowing Rome and the coming of the Messiah instead a focusing on the task at hand — and I'd always be like: "Look fellas, unless your Messiah gonna come down right now and help us catch some *fish*, then, y'all need to shut the heck up and put your undivided focus on these damn *nets*." Then, one day, Drew didn't turn up for work, then he come runnin' up to me at the shore at the end of the day when I'm bringin' the boat back in talkin' 'bout: "This is Jesus, bro — he's the Messiah. I ain't fishin' no more. I'm just gonna follow him" . . .And this Jesus, who resembled a Messiah about as much as I resemble a ballerina in a tutu, strides on up to me and says: "Catch any fish today?" And I says: "No I did not catch any fish today," and he says: "Take the boat back out to the Sea and you gonna catch some fish." So, I took Jesus out with me — intending to throw his ass overboard — but then he says: "Cast your nets wide and deep," so I did, and then . . . well . . . All I can say is, I'm a damn professional commercial fisherman. No one knew the Sea and its tides better than me. There weren't no fish out there . . . but . . . that's because it turned out they was all in my net. And then Jesus said: "Follow me and I will make you a fisher of men." And what I didn't know then was that I would never see the Sea again.

SAINT MATTHEW

My name is Matthew. I was a Jewish tax collector for the Empire. My job was to take the food out of your mouth and see it shipped off to Rome. Roman tax was

exorbitant and non-negotiable. If you had six geese, I took three. If you had a flock of sheep, I took fifty percent. If you had only one sheep, I cut that sheep in half. If you had no sheep, I took a child — your child — and had him or her sold into slavery to settle your debt to the Emperor. This is not a made-up story. This is history. This is fact. We were a conquered nation and I was a traitor to my people. I was a Jew stealing from Jews. According to our laws, I was a sinner and a traitor, I was unclean — unfit to be gazed upon. That's who I was.

SAINT PETER

I hated your ass to look at it.

SAINT MATTHEW

And I looked at you, Peter, as a dumb, ignorant fisherman.

SAINT PETER

And I looked at you, Matthew, as something I can't say in mixed company.

SAINT MATTHEW

I was a scumbag.

SAINT PETER

True 'Dat.

SAINT MATTHEW

I was a scumbag, and it was against the law to look me in the eye. Jesus, he looked me in my eye. That's all he did. He looked me in my eye and he said: "Follow me." And before I knew it, I had. And before we broke bread that night, I was clean again . . .

*(Beat.)*

I was *clean.*

*Lights fade as the gavel bangs.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

El-Fayoumy, are we ready to proceed?

EL-FAYOUMY *rises.*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Absolutely! . . . Forgive me the delay . . . Mother Teresa — I will not take much of your time here, and, certainly, you are in no need of introduction.

MOTHER TERESA

I don't mind.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Very well, then . . . Mother Teresa, you are a soon-to-be-canonized saint and a recipient of the Nobel Prize for Peace. You are from Albania, which tells me you know how to handle a firearm, but yet, from the age of twelve, you desired to serve God, at eighteen you entered the convent, and at twenty-one, you left for the slums of Calcutta, and soon after began ministering to the sick and dying — which you did with mercy, love, grace, and generosity for the rest of your life until the day you died. Correct?

MOTHER TERESA

Jess.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. Absolutely yes, Mother. Now then, Mother, I call you to the stand today for a special purpose.

MOTHER TERESA

And what is dat?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. I am coming to it . . . Mother, your life and subsequent canonization suggest to me that you know a thing or two about God and the life of the spirit — correct?

MOTHER TERESA

I know what I know. What do you want to know?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. Mother. Is there a Hell?

MOTHER TERESA

I hope not, but I think so.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Judas Iscariot — he is in Hell — yes?

MOTHER TERESA

Well, we can't never know for sure, but it doan look good.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Mother, shouldn't we feel sorry for someone in Hell?

MOTHER TERESA

Very sorry. Jess.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Does God feel sorry for people in Hell?

MOTHER TERESA

More sorry than us. Jess.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

But, if God feels so sorry, why not bring the "damned" upstairs? "There hots and a cot," yes? Surely God has that power?

MOTHER TERESA

Boy, God can lead us anywhere, but sometimes, the people, they doan wanna go. And if the people doan wanna go, then, whaddya gonna do?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

But surely, these people do not prefer to go to Hell?

MOTHER TERESA

You'd be surprised. Do you know what despair is, boy?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Mother, illuminate me.

MOTHER TERESA

I will tell you what Thomas Merton — who was a very handsome boy like you — I will tell you what dat boy had to say about despair. You may not know this, but I at one time in my life suffered a great spiritual darkness —

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Oh no, not you —

MOTHER TERESA

Quiet now, boy. Jess, for many, many years, I experienced a terrible pain of loss, of God not wanting me, of God not being God, and of God not really existing. One day, I confided my feelings to a friend: an Irish Nun, one of the Sisters of Loretto from Dublin, Ireland. My friend, Sister Glenna, she quoted to me Thomas Merton on the subject of despair. She said:

SISTER GLENNA *appears.*

SISTER GLENNA

"Despair . . . is the ultimate development of a pride so great and so stiff-necked that it selects the absolute misery of damnation rather than accept happiness from the hands of God and thereby acknowledge that He is above us and that we are not capable of fulfilling our destiny by ourselves."

MOTHER TERESA

Do you understand what I'm saying to you?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Can you repeat it?

MOTHER TERESA

Jess, sure:

SISTER GLENNA

"Despair . . . is the ultimate development of a

pride so great and so stiff-necked that it selects the absolute misery of damnation rather than accept happiness from the hands of God and thereby acknowledge that He is above us and that we are not capable of fulfilling our destiny by ourselves."
YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Ah, yes. I think I see.

SISTER GLENNA *vanishes.*

MOTHER TERESA

Judas, he succumb to despair. The music of God's love and Grace kept playing, but he, he made himself hard of hearing — like me, no? I need this earphone device to hear you, jess? Without them, I can no hear nothing. Judas, he threw his earphones away — and dat is very sad, but dat is what he chose and dat is what happened.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

But Mother, couldn't God have just obtained a megaphone and simply shouted instructions into Judas's ear?

MOTHER TERESA

Boy, one must participate in one's own salvation. In order to hear, one must be willing to listen. When you turn off God, you are saying: "I know better than you." No good, boy. No good.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

No good indeed. Mother, you are a ravishing delight and I thank you for your astute and expert testimony!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Cross?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Mother Teresa, upon receiving your Nobel Prize, did you say to the world, quote: "The biggest obstacle to Global Peace in the world today is abortion"?

MOTHER TERESA

Jess. I said dat.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Do you actually believe that?

MOTHER TERESA

Jess, I do.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You accepted large cash donations from the Duvalier family in Haiti, correct?

MOTHER TERESA

Jess.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Duvalier being a dictator who murdered and stole from his people?

MOTHER TERESA

He gave. I took.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Blood money?

MOTHER TERESA

No. Cashier's check.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You also took money from Charles Keating, the savings-and-loan scam artist who robbed American citizens

of billions of dollars?

MOTHER TERESA

For the poor, I took it. You got five dollars? I take from you, too.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You opposed the Vatican II reforms, which among other things, called for a long-overdue official condemnation of anti-Semitism as it relates to the death of Christ. Did you oppose Vatican II, Mother Teresa?

MOTHER TERESA

Jess.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You blamed the wars of the world on abortion, took blood money from murderers and thieves, and opposed taking a stance against anti-Semitism. I'm having trouble understanding why we're supposed to consider you an expert on anything having to do with the spirit.

MOTHER TERESA

Oh, jess?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Yes.

MOTHER TERESA

Then maybe you better figure it out.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I had two abortions, Mother Teresa, what do you think about that?

MOTHER TERESA

I will pray for you and your children.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I don't have any children.

MOTHER TERESA

Not anymore, and dat's terrible.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Mother Teresa, if abortion is so terrible, then how come I'm not in Hell?

MOTHER TERESA

I don't know. Did anybody tell you you weren't?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Must be nice to have all the answers.

MOTHER TERESA

Must be hard to have only questions.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I can live with my questions, Mother Teresa. But if you can live with those answers, then, with all due respect, I'd say your place is not in Heaven with the Saints, but with the rest of the dinosaurs living in the Stone Age. Nothing further.

EL-FAYOUMY *rises emphatically.*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Mother Teresa — I wonder if you join me in wondering just

*(turning to* CUNNINGHAM *)*

*who the hell defense counsel thinks she's speaking like that to??!!*

MOTHER TERESA

It's okay, boy. Everybody wanna say something —

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

— Yes —

MOTHER TERESA

— Nobody wanna listen nothing.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

This is correct, Mother. And on that well-struck note, Mother, let us now go back and address some of the outlandish —

MOTHER TERESA *rises.*

MOTHER TERESA

I go now.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

But I'm not finished.

MOTHER TERESA

I go now.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Oh . . . As you wish, Mother.

*(To jury)*

And I think we should all emblazon in our memories —

MOTHER TERESA *takes off her earphones.*

MOTHER TERESA

Boy.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes, Mother?

MOTHER TERESA

Maybe, Boy, you give this earphone device to Girl. Like this, maybe Girl gonna hear something make her head don't hurt no more.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

There's nothing wrong with my head!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Cunningham, stand down!

MOTHER TERESA

Nice boy . . . Handsome boy . . .

*And time stands still as we see* MOTHER TERESA *hobble off with* BAILIFF.

*Gavel bangs.*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Defense calls Simon the Zealot to the stand.

SIMON *enters, carrying a staff.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Name.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Simon the Zealot.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You were one of the twelve apostles, Simon — correct?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Yeah.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And you were a zealot.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Yeah.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Was Judas Iscariot a zealot?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Well, he didn't go to the meetings or nuthin', but, yeah, he was pretty much a zealot if you ax me.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Zealots being Jews seeking an end to the violent oppression of the Roman occupation, correct?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Actually, not exactly, no.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Are you saying the zealots were *in favor* of the occupation?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Nah. Not at all. We hated the Romans — absolutely we wanted their pagan asses to hit the curb runnin' and bloody, but we was also opposed to any gentiles in Palestine — Greek, Roman, whoever. What us zealots was really about was promoting a strict adherence to the Mosaic Law.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Mosaic Law being?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

The Law of Moses — the Torah. That was the whole bag right there, miss. Get rid of the bad seeds and unite the people under the Holy Law of God. Basically, we were the street version of Caiaphas the Elder except we had knives and shit and we thought Caiaphas was soft.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Soft how?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

With the Romans. He was a bit of a politician, ya know?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And what was life like under Roman rule?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Where you from, miss?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

New York.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Okay: Imagine New York was taken over by, like, Violent Devil-Worshipping Cannibals who spit on your laws, stole all your money, took your women and children as slaves, and put giant swastikas on all your bridges, tunnels, libraries, and civic institutions . . . and anybody that complained about it got nailed naked to a piece of wood in Times Square — left to be eaten by rats, and shit on by pigeons until the weight of their body asphyxiated them to death. That's what it was like.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And you thought Jesus was going to change that, didn't you?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

We all did.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Change it how?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Throw them out. That's what the Messiah was supposed to do.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But he didn't do that, did he?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Nah.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And yet he was capable of it, wasn't he? You saw him perform miracles, raise people from the dead.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

It was a bit of a conundrum, yeah.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Were you at the disturbance at the Temple?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Yeah.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

What did you think about that?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Ya kiddin'? I loved it. Judas, too. We all did. We thought it was on, ya know?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

"On" meaning?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

The beginnin' of the revolution.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But it wasn't, was it?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Nah.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

What happened after the riot at the Temple?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Jesus had us all retreat to this house, then, he was like: "I'm going to die soon, so let's just chill."

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Must have been very disappointing.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

It was confusing — I mean, whacked-out shit, man. One minute Jesus is beating infidels down — and I'm talking fists and whips — Jesus was shipping ass, knockin' out teeth, screaming he's gonna tear down the Temple, the next minute, he's all passive. And we were all like: We invested three years in this guy, and now he's gonna just lay down? It didn't seem to make no sense.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Simon: Why do you think Judas Iscariot turned Jesus in to the authorities?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Personally, I think Judas was trying to throw Jesus into the deep end of the pool — make him swim.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Judas was testing Jesus?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Not testing,' cuz we all knew Jesus had mad skills pass the test.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

What then?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Lissen, I knew Judas pretty good. We was pretty tight on account of, ya know, our politics and whatnot. What I believe is this: Judas knew that if the Romans grabbed up Jesus, that Jesus would have to act.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Meaning?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Meaning *Act.* Get it on and start kicking

ass like He was supposed to. Emancipation was our birthright. That's what the Messiah was there for. I think, personally, that Judas did what he did to help Jesus realize his destiny and fulfill his mission.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Judas tried to help Jesus?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

I believe so. Yes.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Thank you.

EL-FAYOUMY *rises.*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

So . . . Judas was a "helper," eh?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Yeah.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Just . . . there to lend zee helping hand, yes?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Yeah.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. Yes, I think you are correct, Zealous one! Because, for me, I know that if *my* best friend were to sell me out and betray me for a roll of quarters, causing me to be beaten, whipped, gouged, and mangled, and then strung up and left to be baked by the Hot Judean Sun till I resembled a shriveled-up, bearded *frankfurter* — Why Yes!

I'm sure my first thought as I gasped for air and bled to death would be, "Really, that Judas — what a *helpful* guy! — Oh, yes, I must remember to send him zee Thank-You *note*"!! . . . . . Simon the Zealot, let's talk turkey: Judas was your friend, yes?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Yeah.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

You thought the same way, yes?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Yeah.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Shared the same opinions.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Yeah.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Had the same beliefs.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Yeah.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Wanted the same things.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Yeah.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Wanted them desperately.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Yeah.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Then why, Zealot, did you not do like Judas did? If you believed what you believed and thought what you thought, why, Zealot, did you not join Judas or turn Jesus in on your own? Can you explain me this?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

. . . I don't know.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Protecting a friend — that is admirable indeed. Zealot, Jesus never said his mission as Messiah on Earth was to overthrow the Romans, did he?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Not exactly, no.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

You wanted it to be the mission, you even thought it was the mission, but it wasn't really the mission, was it?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

I guess not.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

How is it, Zealous One, that *you* came to understand that violence wasn't part of Jesus's mission, but *Judas* never did?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

. . . I couldn't say.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Answer me this: What was your inner life like before you met Jesus of Nazareth? And I don't think I need to advise you to be honest here, do I?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Nah. I was consumed with anger. Jesus — he saved my life.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Man of Zeal: Final Question: Do you believe, as the Bible says, that God made man in his own image?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

I do.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Of course you do, and there, Zealous friend, lies the answer to one of my previous questions. The difference, I posit, between you and Judas Iscariot is that you *accepted* that you were created in God's Image, whereas Judas Iscariot — he sought to create God into *his own image* — God as earthly avenger, which was not God's way. And even though

you were scared, Zealot, even though you were confused and angry, and hurt, still, you chose to obey God, didn't you?
SIMON THE ZEALOT

I guess I got lucky.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Luck indeed! Simon the Zealot: There is something beautiful about you — and that — is your modesty. You are a God-Fearing Man. Go now. Be free.

CUNNINGHAM *rises.*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Jesus never proclaimed himself to be God, Simon — correct?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Nah. He never did.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

What did Jesus say to Judas at the last supper?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

He said, "Do what you gotta do."

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Sounds like Jesus approved.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Maybe.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But if you were Judas, Simon, and "doing what you had to do" ended up getting you thrown into despair and hanging from a tree and then sent to Hell to live in misery and infamy in perpetuity — if you were Judas — wouldn't you have kinda wished that Jesus had maybe said something else instead?

SIMON THE ZEALOT

Yeah, counselor. I very much would have.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Would it kind of make you feel like you got fucked?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Objection: Language! "A foul mouth is a dirty bird"!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I withdraw the question.

SIMON THE ZEALOT

. . . I woulda felt like you said, though.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Thank you, Simon. Nothing further.

SIMON *exits.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Next witness!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Most reverent señor — with your magisterial permission — Prosecution now conjures Satan — Prince of Darkness, to the stand!

SATAN *enters, waves amiably to the jury.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Name!

SATAN

*(to* CUNNINGHAM *)*

Fabiana Aziza Cunningham, right?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Lou.

SATAN

I been keeping the light on for ya, Cunningham.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

C'mon now, Lou — why don't you take your seat and we can get started here?

SATAN

You never change, Frank, do you?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

I suppose I don't.

SATAN

I like that about you. Now say, how's Wilhemina doing? And the girls?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

I wouldn't know. Now, park your caboose in that chassis if you would, please?

SATAN

I'm sorry. Of course.

*(To EL-FAYOUMY)*

Fire away.

*(To JUDGE)*

My apologies, Frank.

BAILIFF *enters.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Bailiff!

BAILIFF

I was helping the elderly, sir!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Let's just proceed. El-Fayoumy — proceed!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Ah. Yes. Uh . . . Yes . . . Uh . . . How are you today, Satan?

SATAN

Well . . . Long night, but uh, no regrets.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Up late partying with the decadent and debauched?

SATAN

Oh, God, does it show?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Oh — No no, not at all.

SATAN

I'll tell ya — I could barely make it through my double-session Pilates this morning — if it weren't for the good genes, I'd be a raisin with tits and a perm.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. Well, you look very good. Sincerely. Really, Satan, you have an excellent physique.

SATAN

Oh — Thank you. So do you.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Oh. Thank you, too. Yes, I make exercises . . .

Anyway, so . . . No horns and tail today, Prince of Evil?

SATAN

No.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

At the dry cleaners, I suppose.

SATAN

Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes . . . . . I must say, Claimer of the Damned, your candor is quite refreshing.

SATAN

As is yours.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Oh . . . Thank you . . . Yes . . . Oh! Your jacket, Satan, really, it is smart.

SATAN

You like it?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Beautiful, really. Armani?

SATAN

Gucci.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

"Gucci." Yes. Elegant. Very. Yes . . . So . . .

(And your trousers, they are Gucci, too?)

SATAN

Yeah.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

They have a lovely sheen . . . Anyway, let's begin then, shall we?

SATAN

I am at your service.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

I appreciate that.

SATAN

And I appreciate your appreciation.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Excellent . . . So . . . Dark One, tell me: Did you ever have any conversations with Judas Iscariot prior to his selling-out of Jesus Christ?

SATAN

No, I did not.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Sure about that?

SATAN

Quite sure, yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Never "entered into him," as I believe Saint Luke's Gospel puts it?

SATAN

No.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

And again, you are more or less sure of that?

SATAN

Ask my main squeeze, Sheila: If I had "entered" Judas Iscariot, trust me, he woulda felt my considerable "presence" — if you know what I mean.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes — you and Jimmy Woods — I've heard the rumors. So then, it would be safe to say that the "Devil didn't make him do it"?

SATAN

Absolutely — Unless, of course, there's some other Devil runnin' around that I don't know about.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Very funny. Really, you are quite charming, Satan . . . But let us be quite clear: You did nothing, Satan, nothing, to sway Judas Iscariot towards selling out Jesus of Nazareth, Prince of Peace? Correct?

SATAN

Correct.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Not even a tiny nudge?

SATAN

Honestly, he didn't require nudging. Judas was a gimme — It happens like that sometimes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

A "gimme," yes. A bad seed.

SATAN

Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. Well, then, how 'bout after he did the deadly deed? Did you speak with the Savior Betrayer then?

SATAN

I spoke to him, yeah.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Care to share?

SATAN

Not a problem. I appeared to Mister Iscariot at Bathsheba's Bar and Grill shortly after the night in question. I was actually in town for a guy named Abdul Mazzi-Hatten, but he never showed. When I encountered Mister Iscariot, he appeared to have already taken full advantage of the Happy Hour.

JUDAS *crosses to playing area. He is very drunk and very troubled.* SATAN *meets him.*

Oh. Hello, friend. How are you this evening?
JUDAS ISCARIOT

"How am I this evening?" — what are you, a fuckin' maître d', man?

SATAN

I'm Clementine. Clementine of Cappadocia.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Yeah?! Well, why don't you go home and fuck your mother, Cappa-douche-a, okay?!

SATAN

"Doe-sha" — Cappa-doe-sha.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

What??!!

SATAN

It's Cappa-doe-sha.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Well, lemme ask you something — Cappa-douche-ah — Do I look like someone who gives a flying fuck right now about where the fuck you're from?!

SATAN

I'm very sorry.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Sorry don't mean shit, dick! Take all the "sorries" in the world, pile 'em one on top of the other, ya know what you got, Cappa-douche? You got a big pile a fuckin' nuthin' is what you got! Okay?

SATAN

You're right.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

You wanna do somethin' about it??!!

SATAN

No, sir.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Then go fuck your mother and leave me the fuck alone!

SATAN

I will. Thanks for the advice.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Hey!!! . . . Where you going?!

SATAN

It seems like you preferred to be alone.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Why would I prefer that?! What're you saying: I look like some kinda Lone Wolf? Like a fuckin' piranha, bro?

SATAN

Do you mean Pariah?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I mean what I mean. Whaddya — need a light or something?

SATAN

Oh. Thanks.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Like this lighter?

SATAN

Very nice.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I bought it today, man. Expensive shit, but — I got it like that.

SATAN

I can see you're a man of wealth and substance. I admire that.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

"Wealth and substance" — don't push it. So, what's your name?

SATAN

. . . Clementine. Clementine of Cappadocia.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Clementine, eh? Isn't that a girl's name?

SATAN

Not in Cappadocia.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Well, it is here, bro — you sure you ain't a girl, man?

SATAN

Pretty sure, yeah.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I'm Judas, Judas Iscariot — maybe you heard of me?

SATAN

Nah, man — I'm from out of town.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

You never heard of me?

SATAN

Nope.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

You don't get around much, do ya, Clementine? So whereabouts you from, man — Egypt?

SATAN

Cappadocia.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

That's in Egypt, though, right?

SATAN

No — Cappadocia is in Cappadocia.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I dig your pyramids, man — and the sphinx?

*(to BARTENDER)*

Bartender! Hey! More of that Mesopotamian Wine for my Nubian friend! And some dates and figs, too!

*(To SATAN)*

You smoke opium, Clam?

SATAN

Clem.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

And some opium, bartender — the good stuff!

SATAN

You seem like a man on a mission.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Took this girl to a puppet show today, man.

SATAN

Yeah? How was it?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Fuckin' sucked. Puppets are bullshit, ya know?

SATAN

In Cappadocia, we burn puppets!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Well, you people got the right idea over there — That Pharaoh, he's a smart man. Yeah, man. Hey, Clammy — Cheers!

SATAN

Cheers!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Yeah. — Whoa! Hey man, thass a nice shirt, what you pay for it?

SATAN

Two pieces of silver.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Two pieces of silver? HA!!!! I'll give you five. Here ya go, switch shirts with me.

SATAN

But, I'm rather fond of this shirt.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

C'mon, man — switch shirts — switch shirts. We're buds now, friends an' shit — I'll let you be my wingman — get you laid, bro!

SATAN

A nice brunette?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Two brunettes and a eunuch! C'mon, strip!

SATAN

Oh, okay.

*They switch shirts.*

*(To audience)*

He was so drunk, he didn't even notice my unmistakably Satanic stench.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Yo, I dig this shirt, what is it? Silk?

SATAN

From Cappadocia.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Fuckin' Cappadocian Silk!! All right!

SATAN

Your shirt is nice, too.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Yeah?

SATAN

Yeah.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Wow . . . . . Thanks, man. That's a nice thing to say. Yeah. Been a while since I heard something nice. That's really nice, bro.

*Beat.*

Hey, man, if I told you something corny, would you think that I was, like, a dick?

SATAN

Not at all.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Okay . . . I'm kinda mildly afraid of going to Hell.

SATAN

Why?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Minor incident last night — a miscalculation on my part — nothing serious.

SATAN

Well, one thing I can tell you about Hell: As an eternal destination, it's apparently vastly underrated.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Yeah?

SATAN

And "Hell" is nothing more than the Absence of God, which, if you're looking for a good time, is not at all a bad thing. You wanna play the lute, sing Mary Chapin Carpenter — that's what Heaven's for. You wanna rock? Apparently, Hell's the venue.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Are there, like, girls down there?

SATAN

Not many, but I hear they import them from developing nations on weekends . . . But hey, I wouldn't worry about going to Hell.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Even if I did something, perhaps, a little controversial?

SATAN

God understands.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Yeah, but, don't choices have, like, consequences?

SATAN

C'mon, you really think we have a choice?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Well, don't we?

SATAN

Okay: Did you pass by that fuckin' disgusting, stinky, fuckin' leper on your way in here tonight?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Who? Freddy?

SATAN

"Freddy," yeah: You think *he* had a choice, Freddy, stinkin it up out there, can't scratch his balls for fear a pullin' out his testes? Huh? And what about what's-his-face from the old days — Job? Don't you think if Job had a choice he woulda been like: "Okay, God, enough! I get the fucking point"?!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Yeah, but, Job did say that!

SATAN

Yes he did! And what happened next, Judas? God kept right on fucking with him until Job made the only choice

available — which was to quietly keep his wrinkly ass-cheeks spread wider than the Red Sea till God got tired of drilling him for oil!
JUDAS ISCARIOT

I guess . . . But say . . . Ah, never mind.

SATAN

What?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Not important.

SATAN

C'mon.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Okay. Well, say, what if someone were to betray, for example . . . the Messiah —

SATAN

— You mean the *Messiah*, messiah?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Yeah. Say some idiot had a choice to betray the Messiah or not betray him, and he chose to betray him?

SATAN

Gee, I couldn't say. Whadda you think?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I'd say the guy's fucked, right?

SATAN

I really couldn't say.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

C'mon Clams, I'm just askin'.

SATAN

Well, since you asked, I guess I'd say that if this guy —

JUDAS ISCARIOT

'Cuz this is just some hypo-theoretical guy here —

SATAN

Right. I'd say that if this clown we're talking about betrayed the Messiah, that, probably, " *it would've been better for that man if he had never been born.*"

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Never been born???!!!

SATAN

Hey — you asked.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

That's heavy, man. That's a fuckin' heavy trip, man, Clams.

SATAN

I'm thirsty — how 'bout you?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

That's fuckin' really heavy.

SATAN

Let's have another round here, Pops! Two barrels of wine and a hooker menu!

*(To* JUDAS *)*

You okay, man?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Clams, man, I haven't been laid in three years, bro. Can ya believe that — guy like me?

SATAN

Three years?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I wasted my prime, man. And then I wasted my prime after my prime.

SATAN

Well, I think you'll prolly get fucked tonight, bro.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Ya think so?

SATAN

Yeah. I'm pretty sure.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I wanna nother fuckin' drink. Tonight man, I'm gonna drink this fuckin' bar!

SATAN

Hey. Judas, lemme ask you something: Who is this Jesus of Nazareth guy I've been hearing about?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Jesus of Nazareth?

SATAN

Yeah — I heard he's some kinda somebody.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Some kinda somebody?

SATAN

Yeah, that's what I heard.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Aw, fuck that guy, man — he's a bitch!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY *rises triumphantly.*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*"FUCK THAT GUY, HE'S A BITCH"!!!!! Your Honor! Nothing further!*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Cross?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

. . . Not at this time.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Lou, stick around.

SATAN

I know the drill.

*The gavel bangs.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Meal break! Fifteen minutes!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Fabiana, free for lunch?

*Gavel bangs. Lights fade.*

*Cross-fade to* JUDAS' *s lair.* JESUS *is there with his bucket, alone.*

**Act 2: Sic Deus Dilexit Mundum**

ACT 2 "SIC DEUS DILEXIT MUNDUM"

SAINT MONICA *appears with* MARY MAGDALENE.

SAINT MONICA

Hey, y'all. This is Mary Mags — she the only bitch I let hang with me up here. Tell 'em whatchu gotta say.

MARY MAGDALENE

My name is Mary of Magdala. I was a disciple of Jesus, I was present at the crucifixion, and I was the first person He appeared to after the resurrection.

SAINT MONICA

Bitch got *clout!*

MARY MAGDALENE

I was one of the founders of the Christian faith, and I was known for my ability, in times of difficulty, to be able to turn the hearts of the Apostles towards the Good.

SAINT MONICA

The good!

MARY MAGDALENE

Some people think I was a whore.

SAINT MONICA

Misogynist bitches!

MARY MAGDALENE

Other people think Jesus was my husband.

SAINT MONICA

Femin-o-tic bitches!

MARY MAGDALENE

I was not a whore.

SAINT MONICA

"Pimps up, Hos *Down*!"

MARY MAGDALENE

I was an unmarried woman in a town of ill repute.

SAINT MONICA

*Ill* repute!

MARY MAGDALENE

And also, I was not the wife of Jesus either.

SAINT MONICA

Still love ya!

MARY MAGDALENE

But, I am pretty sure that I was his best friend. We shared an intimacy that I cannot put to words except to say we saw into each other's hearts and were in love with what we found . . .

SAINT MONICA

Love!

MARY MAGDALENE

I also knew Judas Iscariot very well.

SAINT MONICA

Gangsta!

MARY MAGDALENE

Out of the Twelve, he was the most moody and the most impetuous, and yet, he was my favorite.

SAINT MONICA

Tupac!

MARY MAGDALENE

And in some ways, I think he was Jesus's favorite too . . . Judas was almost an alter ego to Jesus — he was the shadow to Jesus's light. He was the sour to the sweet and the cool to the warm. They often walked together, more often than not arguing — no one could get a rise out of Jesus like Judas could. I can remember times when Jesus emerged from an argument with Judas positively furious — shaking his head wildly, snorting, and clicking his teeth, red-faced with exasperation — and he would tell me what they had been fighting about — still agitated — but, inevitably, he would end up staring into space and sighing — smiling. I think that if someone were to say that Judas was good for Jesus that they would not be mistaken . . .

SAINT MONICA

Not mistaken!

MARY MAGDALENE

When I think of Judas, my heart breaks.

SAINT MONICA

But Mary Mags: If we are all eternal, and if Human Life is only the first mile in a *billion*, do you honestly

believe that God could abandon any mothahfuckah so soon in the journey?

MARY MAGDALENE

I don't know. Jesus never talks about it. That's how I know His heart hurts worse than mine.

*The gavel bangs.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Next witness!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Defense calls Sigmund Freud, Your Honor.

BAILIFF

Name!

SIGMUND FREUD

Doctor Sigmund Shlomo Freud.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Doctor Freud, would it be accurate to say you qualify as an expert in the field of modern psychiatry?

SIGMUND FREUD

Fräulein — I AM modern psychiatry.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Objection, Your Honor! — the witness is boasting!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Overruled!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

But a "boaster," Your Eminence — it is distasteful, really!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Siddown, El-Fayoumy!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

I lunge to obey you, your grace — but let the record reflect that Prosecution has grave reservations about this man's alleged so-called "standing" as a psychiatric expert!

SIGMUND FREUD

Perhaps a quick jaunt to London for a leisurely perusal of "The Standard Edition of *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Volumes One Through Twenty-Four*" would set your mind at ease.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*Perhaps it would if you were indeed* . . . . . Oh. I see. Right. Yes. Of course. Uh . . . Yes.

*He sits.*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Doctor Freud, you are, in fact, the "Founder of Psychoanalysis," correct?

SIGMUND FREUD

I am.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You maintained a private practice in neuropathology for nearly a half century; is that not so?

SIGMUND FREUD

It is.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You were on the cover of *Time* magazine in an issue dedicated to the greatest scientific minds of the twentieth century.

SIGMUND FREUD

I was.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Are you familiar with the case history of one Judas Iscariot?

SIGMUND FREUD

Most certainly.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Doctor Freud, in your expert opinion, can a suicide victim be precertified as psychotic?

SIGMUND FREUD

Without question. Man's instinct for self-preservation is his most supple and reflexive muscle. When that muscle fails, it is because his mind has failed. A decision to take one's own life can only be precipitated by a failure of the mind — an irrational rebellion against man's most basic instinct — to endure and live. Therefore, yes — the victim of suicide must be precertified as, indeed, psychotic.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

In your expert opinion, Doctor Freud, was Judas Iscariot a psychotic?

SIGMUND FREUD

Without question.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And are psychotics responsible for their actions?

SIGMUND FREUD

No, they are not. For example, say I have a bad bout of influenza. As a result of my bad influenza, I sneeze rudely, but involuntarily, in your face. The next day, you wake up with the same flu. Did I cause your flu? No. My flu caused your flu. I only sneezed because I was sick.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

In your opinion, Doctor Freud, does Judas Iscariot belong in Hell?

SIGMUND FREUD

No, he does not.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Explain.

SIGMUND FREUD

Suicide is a direct sign of mental illness.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But did he become mentally ill *after* allegedly betraying Jesus of Nazareth, or was he mentally ill to begin with?

SIGMUND FREUD

Preprogrammed, yes. You must understand: Normal people do not kill themselves — even under extreme duress.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And what would you say to people who would

say that Judas brought about his own mental illness by betraying Jesus and getting him crucified?
SIGMUND FREUD

I would say this: Number One, you cannot conjure or "bring about" mental illness. Number Two, any God who punishes the mentally ill is not worth worshipping. And, Number Three: "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" — the person who could have prevented this tragedy was Jesus, not Judas. He chose not to.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But isn't Judas responsible because he did what he did of his own free will?

SIGMUND FREUD

Fräulein, I once had a suicidal patient leap through my fourth-floor window to her death. She exercised her free will — did I bill her estate for the broken plate-glass window she leapt through? Of course not! My friend Winston Churchill, who provided me safe haven from the Nazis in 1938, likes to say: "The price of greatness is *responsibility.*" I believe firmly in taking responsibility. So, after the unfortunate woman's death, I exercised responsibility for *my* greatness — by moving my offices to the ground floor. I should think God would have done the same.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your witness.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Doctor Freud, yes, sorry for the mix-up before.

FREUD *yawns big and disdainfully.*

SIGMUND FREUD

*(re: the yawn)*

Excuse me.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

So, Herr Doktor — I must admit I am intimidated to be in the midst of such greatness. After all, you are a "genius," correct?

SIGMUND FREUD

Correct.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

An "expert"?

SIGMUND FREUD

Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

A big brain.

SIGMUND FREUD

Unequivocally.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. "Unequivocally." Yes. Nice word. And it rolls off your tongue so effortlessly — really, I am impressed.

FREUD *again yawns big and disdainfully.*

A little tired, are we, Doctor? Perhaps a kilo or two of *fine-grade Bolivian flake* would restore your pep?!

SIGMUND FREUD

Excuse me?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Cocaine, Doctor! "Blow," "Flake," "Rock" — "She don't lie" — does she, Doc?!!!

SIGMUND FREUD

What?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Over a twelve-year span, you consumed cocaine in what can only be categorized as Prodigiously Massive Quantities, correct?

SIGMUND FREUD

As part of my research, yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

"Research" — yes. And after twelve years of round-the-clock research, you finally came to the conclusion that ingesting staggering amounts of powder up your nose was, perhaps, unhealthy?

SIGMUND FREUD

I was trying to determine its medicinal value.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Is that your real nose?

SIGMUND FREUD

Your mother denied you her breast, didn't she?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

I'll thank you to let me ask the questions, Doctor Fried.

SIGMUND FREUD

*Freud!*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Oh, yes, Freud, of course. Forgive me, I made a "you"-slip, didn't I? . . . Anyway, last question Mr˙ Expert Genius: Doctor Freud: You were an avowed atheist all your life, correct?

SIGMUND FREUD

Correct.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

And then you died and found out what?

SIGMUND FREUD

I experienced anti-Semitism as a child — it prejudiced me against all religion.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Einstein experienced prejudice — but he wasn't wrong like you, was he? My cousin Wagui can't count to ten without drooling, but he wasn't wrong like you either, was he? Was he??!!

SIGMUND FREUD

Intelligence and Faith are two different things!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Are they, Doctor Freud? Because I would say that you can't have one without the other. But, of course, I'm not a brilliant genius expert like you, am I?

SIGMUND FREUD

I had a wonderful vibrant mind and my intellectual curiosity was boundless!

EL-FAYOUMY *makes a violin-playing gesture.*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Good day, doctor, go blow your nose — you are excused!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

*(rising)*

Doctor Freud, do sane people commit suicide — yes or no?

SIGMUND FREUD

No!

*(Towards EL-FAYOUMY)*

Though they can sometimes be tempted to *murder!*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Go murder an eight-ball, egghead!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

That's enough! Next witness!

*Gavel bangs.*

Next witness!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Irresistibly Alluring Majesty. Prosecution calls Legendary Hawaiian Singer and Popular Entertainer Don Ho to the stand!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Don Ho's not dead!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Oh. . . Well, thank god for that. In that case, Prosecution calls Caiaphas the Elder, High Priest of the Sanhedrin, to the stand!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*(rising)*

Right. . . Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, at this time, I must excuse myself from these proceedings until such time as said witness has concluded testimony. Before his ascension into the Lap of the Lord, Caiaphas the Elder and I were partners in a successful chain of Kosher Pizza Parlors in East Purgatory — For that reason, at this time, I must step down. *Bailiff!!!* Get your ass over there, put on those glasses, and adjudicate — pronto! Proceed.

JUDGE *exits as* EL-FAYOUMY *approaches* CUNNINGHAM.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Fabiana, may I borrow a pen?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Only if I can shove it through your eye.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*(confidentially)*

Fabiana, how can I prove my sincerity to you? Even though you are always here and I am always here — still — I think of you when you aren't here even though you are always here.

BAILIFF

Next witness, please!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes — I obey.

*(To CUNNINGHAM)*

Later we shall discuss.

*(To BAILIFF)*

Yes. Julius zee Bailiff, correct? May I call you Julius?

BAILIFF

All right.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

How about Jules?

BAILIFF

I guess.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

So tell me J — shall we commence?

BAILIFF

That'd be good.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Wise J: Prosecution calls Caiaphas the Elder!

CAIAPHAS *enters.*

Caiaphas the Elder, High Priest of the Sanhedrin, hello to you.
CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Hello.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

"Shalom" — as it were.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Shalom.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Caiaphas the Elder: Perhaps you can clear this up — is there a Caiaphas the Younger?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

No.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

And yet, you are the Elder?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

I see. Yes. Thank you. My cousin Amghad Wahba owes me five bucks now. So, Caiaphas the Elder: In the Bible, it says that Judas Iscariot made an approach to you — a dark and nefarious approach — to offer up the location of Jesus of Nazareth, and to, in fact, turn him in to you and the authorities. Correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Correct.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Caiaphas the Elder: Are you saying that it was Judas Iscariot who approached you, and not the other way around?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Because I saw in a film once, Caiaphas the Elder, where it was *you* who approached *him.*

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

It was Judas Iscariot who approached me at the Temple, not the other way around.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. But still, even though your statement is indeed confirmed by all four Gospels, Caiaphas the Elder, I must ask you again: Did you approach Judas Iscariot about betraying his leader and Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

I did not.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Why not? Jesus was a big headache to you, no? You were legitimately concerned that the high jinks of Jesus would lead to an uprising and a resulting crushing Roman Massacre of your Jewish people in retribution,

weren't you?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

I was.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

So, why not reach out and touch someone, Caiaphas the Elder?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Are you asking me why I didn't try to approach one of the Apostles initially?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

I didn't think it would work.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Why not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

There is an old rabbinical saying: "Let them kill you, but do not cross the line." During my eighteen-year reign as head of the Sanhedrin and Guardian of the Temple, I dealt with countless Messiahs, zealots, rebels, and fanatical believers. My experience in these matters taught me: They get killed, yes, but as a rule — they do not cross the line.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

"Cross the line," yes — this means what?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

To betray your ideals. Your conscience. The law.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Judas crossed that line, didn't he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

He did.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

He betrayed the ideal in betraying Jesus — The Rabbinical Ideal. He crossed the line.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Do you admire that?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

No. I do not.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

But why not? We all cross the line sometimes, don't we?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

We are all capable of crossing the line. Thankfully, we do not all do it.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

But really, Caiaphas the Elder, what's the big deal? You cross a line, so what? Just draw yourself another line, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

No. Not correct.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Why not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

The line comes from God, doesn't it? The line is given. We do not create it, and thus, it is not ours to modify. It is only ours to Obey or Betray.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

I see. Caiaphas the Elder: When *Pontius Pilate* first arrived in Judea, he visited you in the Temple, did he not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

He did.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

And as a show of his force and might, Pontius Pilate attempted to place symbols of Rome in the Temple, which was, to your people, a great desecration of your Holy place of worship, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Correct.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

It would have constituted a worshipping of False Idols, yes?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Caiaphas the Elder, when you saw Pontius Pilate attempting this, what did you do?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

I told him that he must remove the pagan symbols.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

And what did Pilate say to that?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

I believe the gist of his reply was: "What are you gonna do about it, Curly?"

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

And what *did* you do?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

. . . I knelt before him —

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

— and begged for mercy?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

No.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Groveled for forgiveness?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

No! I removed my headdress, bared my throat to him, and bade him slit it.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

In other words, Caiaphas the Elder, you "let him kill you, but you did not cross the line."

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

I guess so. Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

You did not cross the line!

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

No. I did not.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Judas crossed it, though — didn't he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

He did.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Interesting. And, by the way, what was the result of your standoff with Pilate regarding the sanctity of the Temple?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Pilate backed off.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

He didn't put up the pagan symbols, did he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

No.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

You held the line.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Your integrity castrated him, didn't it — his little Roman balls rolling down the Temple hill like withered purple grapes! Yes?!

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

I have no response to that.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

As well you shouldn't! Now then, last question: Caiaphas the Elder, it has been said that in Western Culture, the most prized virtue is Honesty, but in Eastern Culture — which would include Judea at that time — in Eastern Culture, the most prized virtue was and is Loyalty. Caiaphas the

ELDER

Do you agree with said hypothesis?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Counselor, there are six hundred thirteen Sacred Laws in our Torah. Complying with these Laws requires Honesty *and* Loyalty. But the most important requirement of The Law is *Obedience* to it. That is what is most prized.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. Fair enough. But in your opinion, was Judas Iscariot "loyal"?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Obviously not.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Was he "honest"?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

No.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Caiaphas the Elder: Was Judas Iscariot obedient?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

To his own will and desires — yes. I believe that he was.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

And to service that will and those desires, Judas crossed the line. Didn't he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

He served a necessary purpose, but as a fellow Jew, I confess he disgusted me.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Caiaphas the Elder, I thank you — and may I add, you are much more handsome in person than when they portray you on the silver screen!

CUNNINGHAM *rises.*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

"High Priest of the Sanhedrin" — that was an extremely powerful and prestigious position in Judea — correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Correct.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

In fact, except for the Roman governor and King Herod, the "High Priest" was, in actuality, the most powerful position *in* Judea, was it not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Yes.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Would you mind looking me in the eye when you respond to a question?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

My position was very important. As High Priest, I maintained the Sacred Laws, the safety of the populace, and our tradition.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Caiaphas — Is there a reason you won't meet my gaze? Or is ignoring women simply another component of the tradition you were charged to maintain?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*(rising)*

Objection, Julius! The witness is not just a Holy Man — but a very Holy man! Defense counsel is aware she is a juicy pulchritudinous dish — and yet, the

witness is being berated for merely avoiding the salacious temptations of her intoxicatingly firm and fervently aromatic flesh! I move to censure, really!!
FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I withdraw the question.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Sexy Vixen — you are warned!

BAILIFF

Hey!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Oh! Julius! Yes! Forgive me! She makes my organs bounce! Yes. Uh.

*(To CUNNINGHAM)*

Sorry.

*(To BAILIFF)*

Yes.

*He sits.*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Caiaphas, you stated to the Prosecution that Judas Iscariot "crossed the line" and that he "disgusted you" — correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Correct.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Well then maybe you can help me out here, because I'm a little confused. Judas Iscariot handed Jesus of Nazareth over to you, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Yes.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And then *you* handed Jesus of Nazareth over to Pontius Pilate, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

I did.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

So what exactly is the difference between you and Judas Iscariot — 'cuz unless I'm missing something here, I fail to see it.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Between me and Judas? Big difference.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Caiaphas, you were a rabbi and a Jew. Jesus was a rabbi and a Jew. Is it not crossing the line for one rabbi to hand over another rabbi to be killed by pagans?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Jesus was a blaspheming, seditious rabbi, and I did not know for sure that he would be killed.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But the penalty for sedition was crucifixion, correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

That was the Roman charge, not mine.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Yes. Your charge was Blasphemy — and what was the penalty for Blasphemy, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Your Honor, I will not sit here and be blamed for the death of Christ yet again!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

No one's blaming you for the death of Christ, Caiaphas. I'm simply asking you a question which I am directing you to answer now before this court: You charged Jesus with Blasphemy. What was the penalty for Blasphemy, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

"Stoning, followed by hanging."

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

So then, how can you sit there and pretend that you didn't know for sure that Jesus of Nazareth would be killed?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Jesus could have easily saved himself.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Saved himself how?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

By retracting his Blasphemous claims! Our Torah has six hundred thirteen Sacred Laws — I can't even count how many Jesus broke or treated with wanton disregard and disdain! He broke the laws that came from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! He violated the word of God. He violated the Laws of Moses. He consorted with the Unclean, and women, and prostitutes. He performed Miracles on the Sabbath, He proclaimed himself Messiah! He forgave sin! *Who was he to forgive sin?!* Only God can do that! If that's not crossing the line, then I don't know what is!!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Jesus was fulfilling your Old Testament prophecies of Isaiah to the letter —

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

— He was also fulfilling the prophecies in Deuteronomy which warned against "False Messiahs and Marvel workers"! It would have been one thing had he

confined himself to the forests and rivers spouting his ravings as the Baptist did, but at the Great Temple?! I would have been derelict not to put a stop to it. He was whipping people! Kicking them. Threatening to destroy the Temple! Calling it a Den of Thieves! If someone did that in your Saint Patrick's Cathedral, would you not arrest them?!
FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And yet, Judas Iscariot, who came forward in the face of this "great threat," is in your eyes not a patriot, but a traitor. A traitor who, in your words, "disgusted you." Why is that, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Because he handed Jesus over for money.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And why did you hand Jesus over, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

The words and deeds of Jesus were leading towards rebellion — and the price of rebellion under Roman rule was a bloodbath. A massacre, Counselor. So I determined that it were better to have one man dead than a thousand — that's why.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I see. So, you were looking out for the Common Jewish Man, is that correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

I was.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Were you a Common Jewish Man, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

In the eyes of God, we are all the same.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But how about in the eyes of the Common Jewish Man? You were seen as an Aristocrat, weren't you?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

I came from wealth.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Would you say that you were popular with the Common Jewish Man?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

My job was a sacred one — not a popularity contest.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

The high Temple taxes that you inflicted on your people, would you say that made you more popular with the Common Jewish Man or less popular?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Objection, Your Honor! Vixen is badgering!

BAILIFF

Sustained!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

The exchange rates at the Temple were also extremely unfavorable to the Common Jewish Man, and the purification pools outside the Temple — where the Common Jewish Man was required *by law* to be cleansed before being permitted to enter the Temple — the purification pools were not free either, were they?!

BAILIFF

Cunningham!

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

No no, I'll answer: The laws were the laws and the rates were the rates.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And did you have a sliding scale for the poor?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

No.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

So the poor — who constituted a large percentage of the Common Jewish Man at that time — remained impure and unclean and were denied the right of worship.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

You've made your point.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

No, I don't think I have! Your position, Caiaphas, did not require you to be popular with the Common Jewish Man, did it?!

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

My position required me to answer to God.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Did God appoint you High Priest of the Sanhedrin?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

It was with God's Blessing —

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

— It was with *Rome's* blessing, Caiaphas! You were appointed by *Rome*, and at the end of the day, for the eighteen years you served, that's who you had to answer to, and that's who you were required to be popular with! And the day you showed Rome that you couldn't handle your own people was the day you'd have been thrown out on your ass — isn't that true?!

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

I belonged to God, not Rome! My job was to uphold the six hundred thirteen Sacred Laws, and to protect my Temple and my People — and that's what I did!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And was not Jesus of Nazareth one of your people, Caiaphas? Whether he was a messiah, or a prophet, or a Holy Man, or a crazy man — was he not one of your own?! And was it not considered the height of treachery to betray Jewish blood to your oppressors?! Come on, Caiaphas! Tell us that it did not prick your conscience to turn Jesus, a fellow Jew, over to the Romans! Tell us that handing over a fellow rabbi to his certain death at the hands of the enemy didn't violate your sense of "crossing the line" and your knowledge of the law! Tell us, Caiaphas, that at the end of the day, there was a *difference* — in the eyes of *God* — between what you did and what Judas did!

*Beat.*

This is Purgatory, Caiaphas — I've got all day.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

. . . In terms of result: No difference.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

How about in terms of follow-through: Judas recanted and tried to return the silver, did he not?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

He did.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And did you, Caiaphas, do anything at all to try to prevent Jesus's death?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

No.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And therein lies the real difference between you and Judas Iscariot, does it not? And yet, you sit here and say how Judas "crossed the line" and that he "disgusted" you! And if that's true, Caiaphas, then I wonder, how you must've felt about yourself.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

That's between me and God.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Well then for your sake, Caiaphas, I sure hope that your God has a more forward-thinking attitude than Judas's God does. Step down, you're excused.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Caiaphas the Elder, Judas approached you — correct?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

He didn't have to approach you, Caiaphas the Elder, did he?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

No.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

And yet he did.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Of his own free will.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

And accepted payment for his betrayal.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Yes.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Payment. Judas did not say, "Caiaphas the Elder, put your money away, mister, this one's on the arm," right?

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Right.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Caiaphas the Elder, I think we all realize the precarious position you were in, trying to protect your citizens from Roman reprisal.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

And it makes you feel good to say that, doesn't it? After two thousand years of persecution and vilification, you finally get around to saying: "Hey, we know it wasn't you and your people's fault." Is that it?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Good Caiaphas the Elder, I was only trying to —

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

Win your case, right? I tell you what: You people call me, I come. You question, I answer — but please — never say that you realize the position I was in, because you have no idea the position I was in. And never try to excuse or forgive me, because I'm not interested in your forgiveness. God's forgiveness: This interests me. Yours? I could care less. Why? Because you have no idea. The

people who need forgiving? The people who perpetrated the lies and exaggerations that became sacrosanct fact and led to hatred and violence for the past two thousand years? They are the ones who need forgiving — and not by you — but by me — me — and my people. It's the Writers of the Gospel who need forgiveness — not me. No, sir. I know what it is to suffer. Do you? I don't think so.

*(To BAILIFF)*

Julius: My best to Frank.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

You're very handsome, Caiaphas.

CAIAPHAS THE ELDER

If I am, it's 'cuz God made me, not 'cuz you said so. Good day.

CAIAPHAS *ambles off wearily. Gavel bangs. Cross-fade to* SAINT THOMAS.

SAINT THOMAS

My name is Thomas. At the Last Supper, I was the first one to say that I would die for Jesus, and I was also the first one to head for the hills doing ninety when the Romans came and arrested him. And then, when Jesus resurrected himself, I was also the guy who said I wouldn't believe He was who He said He was unless I could see with my own eyes the holes in His hands and personally inspect them and touch them — as if I was some qualified medical examiner, like Quincy or something. But the thing of it was, Jesus showed them to me. And not only that, He let me touch them. In a ministry based entirely on the virtues of Faith, He gave me proof. I had no Faith, and he gave it to me for free. I don't know why I got the benefit of my doubt, and Judas didn't get help with his. And I'm not saying this 'cuz I liked the guy — 'cuz personally, I thought Judas was a bit of a jerk-off. Actually, "fuckin' dick" would be more accurate. Judas was the kinda guy — at least with me — where, one minute he's your friend, and the next minute, he's

making fun of you in front of everybody. He used to like to say that the reason Jesus had to do the Miracle of the Loaves and the Fishes was because I ate all the food when no one was looking. Stuff like that. But then

other times, he could be real nice, like, once we were partnered together to go into town to heal people and cast out demons, and well, I had some problems that day — everyone I tried to heal ended up getting worse. In fact, this one lady I almost blinded and another guy started going into convulsions — but Judas fixed it. He healed them — he really did — and that tells me his faith was genuine. And when we got back to camp that night, he didn't tell anybody how I messed up. In fact, he said I did a good job, and I appreciated that. I knew Jesus knew it was bullshit, but I appreciated the gesture. I thought it showed largeness on Judas's part. And the thing is, Judas was kind of a dick, but he wasn't shallow or petty. He really was pretty large. He wasn't the best, but he was far from the worst. Jesus liked him, liked him a lot, in fact. Judas was right up there in the top three with Mary Magdalene and Peter, who, by the way, could also be a dick sometimes, too. The trick with Peter was: Never talk about fish. The guy was crazy for fish. Say something wrong about a fish and forgettaboutit. The guy would go crazy. Anyways — some people say Judas did what he did 'cuz he was greedy. Personally, I think that's bullshit. The guy wasn't wandering around the desert for three years with Jesus and a bunch of ragamuffins like us 'cuz he was looking to get rich. Other people say that The Devil got into him. Again, bullshit. Judas was loyal to a fault. Obsessively loyal, even. Judas would have taken on The Devil and his entire army, one against a thousand, if he had to, and he woulda done it with relish. Other people say Judas did it 'cuz he knew the ship was sinking and he was trying to get himself a nut to have something to fall back on.

Lissen: Judas was not a "fall-back" guy, he was one hundred percent "fall forward." And to me, that deserves some consideration. I was not fall forward. Not by a long shot. And neither were most of the others. Judas was a dick, but he deserved better. Just one Saint's opinion.

JUDGE *enters.*

Next witness!
FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

. . . Your Honor, at this time, Defense would like to introduce exhibit A-fourteen, *ancient surveillance footage* of an event that occurred less than twenty-four hours after Jesus's arrest. Lights, please.

*A squad room in Jerusalem.*

SOLDIER

Pilate gonna kick yo ass!

SOLDIER

Pilate gonna see that ass — he gonna kick it two times!

SOLDIER

Yo — when Pilate see this mothahfuckah's ass, he gonna be like: "Centurion! It's time to whup ass!"

SOLDIER

He gonna rape yo wives!

SOLDIER

He gonna take yo cattle!

SOLDIER

He gonna kick yo cattle's ass, too!

SOLDIER

And yo sheep and yo lambs!

SOLDIER

Pilate gonna cancel yo granmutha's WIC check, B!

PILATE *enters.*

PONTIUS PILATE

What's all this damn ruckus about?!

SOLDIER

All hail Pontius Pilate: Hail, hail, hail!

PONTIUS PILATE

Is there a problem here?

SOLDIER

Judas is trying to recant!

PONTIUS PILATE

Hold up a minute, who?!

SOLDIER

Judas Iscariot — from the Jesus of Nazareth crew.

SOLDIER

This stinky mothahfuckah right here!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Jesus is an innocent man — please, please —

SOLDIER

Should we start whupping ass now?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

He's innocent! Please. Please. Jesus is innocent.

PONTIUS PILATE

C'mon now, Judas, them "San-who-saids" — hold up a sec

( *To* SOLDIER 2)

Yo Curt — what they call themselves?

SOLDIER

Sanhedrin, sir.

PONTIUS PILATE

Right. Judas, them SandHeadsSons paid you thirty pieces of silver, now that's four months' wages, that ain't no chicken feed.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I made a mistake, please, please, you don't understand, man —

PONTIUS PILATE

I understand perfectly. You sold out your brother, now you feel guilty, so you tryin' ta come in here talkin' 'bout "It was dark, I kissed the wrong muthahfuckah," but we Romans, man — Romans don't dance that song.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I'm recanting —

PONTIUS PILATE

You can't recant!

*(To his boys)*

Hey, fellas, remember the last Semite strolled up in here talkin' 'bout "I recant"?!

*(To* JUDAS *)*

Believe me, J-Crew, you doan wanna do that. Whatchu need to do is relax, brother — take the wifey to a puppet show, sumpthin'. This ain't nuthin' but a little PR opportunity before the holidays, thass all —

JUDAS ISCARIOT

— But he's innocent. Please. Please —

PONTIUS PILATE

Hey now, lissen: Judas, we don't give no good goddamn 'bout this Jesus — He just a muthahfuckah talks a lotta shit. Everybody talks shit, even *I've* been known to talk a little shit on the once in a while. Thing is: We ain't tryin' to lay down no heavy charge on that Nazareth boy —

we just gonna beat down his ass a little, make them Sanhen-ja-call-its happy so's we can all live in peace. I mean: Dontchu wanna live in peace, Judas? Ain't that what it's all about?

I mean after all, brother, ain't like we lookin' to crucify the muthahfuckah!

*Fade back to courtroom.*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Defense calls Pontius Pilate!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*I object!*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

On what grounds?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

On the grounds that it is objectionable!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Overruled!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

But, your holiness, really, it *is* objectionable: I sense it, although I cannot put it into words.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Overruled!

BAILIFF

Name!

PONTIUS PILATE

Pontius Pilate.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Pontius Pilate?

PONTIUS PILATE

That's right, baby.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

*(rising)*

But are you a *licensed* pilot?!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Siddown, El-Fayoumy!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Pontias Pilate . . . Judas Iscariot came down to your tent to recant his testimony — correct?

PONTIUS PILATE

On the advice of counsel, I cite my right to plead the Fifth Amendment.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You then told Judas Iscariot that Jesus was only gonna receive a "beat down," correct?

PONTIUS PILATE

On the advice of counsel, I cite my right to plead the Fifth Amendment.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You bear responsibility for the death of Jesus

Christ — not Judas Iscariot, but you — Isn't that correct, Pontius Pilate?!
PONTIUS PILATE

On the advice of counsel, blah blah blah.

*(To JUDGE)*

Your Honor, I got a two p˙m˙ tee time — can I go now?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

This won't take long, Pontius.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Judas came to your office and begged you on bended knee to take the money and release Jesus, and you refused him! Judas recanted. He tried to return the money — first to the Sanhedrin and then to you. Do you deny that?

PONTIUS PILATE

Hey, if I had messed up as bad as that cat had, I woulda tried to rebate them ducats, too.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

So you admit that Judas did try?

PONTIUS PILATE

No. I do not admit that he tried. Did you hear me admit that?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

We all know what happened, Pilate — We just saw the tape!

PONTIUS PILATE

Ain't nuthin' on that "so-called" tape implicates me of anything but trying to find a peacefully nonlethal solution to a potentially incendiary problem.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Right. Mister Pilate, you were the Fifth Prefect of Judea, correct?

PONTIUS PILATE

Correct.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

A "Prefect" being what?

PONTIUS PILATE

Governor. Also known as "Procurator." My official title was "Hedg-e-mon."

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

"Hedg-e-mon"?

PONTIUS PILATE

Translated from the Greek, it means "Excellency."

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I see. And you governed or procurated over Judea from twenty-six to thirty-six A˙D˙, correct?

PONTIUS PILATE

Longest ten years of my life.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Why do you say that?

PONTIUS PILATE

You ever *been* to Judea, missy? It ain't Paris, France — believe that.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I see.

PONTIUS PILATE

Yeah, that Moses musta read the map backwards — misplaced his bifocals, sumpthin' — 'cuz if that was the "promised land," shit, them Jews shoulda held out for a better Promise.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You didn't care for Judea much?

PONTIUS PILATE

Care for it? Armpit of the Empire, if you ask me. No atmosphere, nuthin'. Hot. Dirty. Dusty. Flies everywhere. Complete lack of Culture and Amusements. I'd a rather spent ten years up inside the crack a my ass . . . But Augustus ordered me to keep the peace there, so I obeyed my Emperor, and did my duty.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And kept the peace?

PONTIUS PILATE

The Pax Romana, baby, the prime directive — dass right.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And, under your rule, how was the peace kept in Judea, Mister Pilate?

PONTIUS PILATE

By any means necessary.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Violently?

PONTIUS PILATE

Violently or otherwise — they was free to have it any ways they wanted.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

According to Philo of Alexandria, who wrote about you in forty-one C˙E˙, your tenure as Governor of Rome was known for its "constantly repeated executions without trial, wanton injustices, graft, and ceaseless and grievous cruelty" — care to comment?

PONTIUS PILATE

No, I do not.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

During your reign as Procurator in Jerusalem, how many deaths did you order?

PONTIUS PILATE

A lot — don't apologize for it either. Them Jews was rowdy.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

"Rowdy"?

PONTIUS PILATE

Dass right — rowdy. As in: not docile. As in: a muthahfuckah had to put his foot down.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And you put it down, didn't you?

PONTIUS PILATE

Damn skippy I did. Orders from Rome — what's a brothah to do?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

During your tenure in Judea, how many Crucifixions would you say you ordered?

PONTIUS PILATE

A lot less than my predecessor — that's for damn sure! That muthahfuckah would crucify a Semite for yellin' "Fire" at a barbecue — man would go buck-wild from *jump*! Me? I reduced Crucifixions in Palestine by seventy percent, and now, that's documented.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Well, that's lovely, Mister Pilate, but I'll direct you now to answer the question posed to you.

PONTIUS PILATE

Which was what?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

How many Crucifixions did you preside over during your time in Jerusalem?

PONTIUS PILATE

I'd say . . . a few hundred — give or take. So what?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Over seven hundred Crucifixions while you were on assignment in Judea. Does that sound about right?

PONTIUS PILATE

Sound good to me. Sure.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And you publicly washed your hands of how many of them, Mister Pilate?

*Pause.*

PONTIUS PILATE

I don't know what you mean by that.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I mean that, other than Jesus of Nazareth, out of over seven hundred Crucifixions and countless executions, did you ever — in any other instance — publicly wash your hands and attempt to abdicate responsibility for your actions, Mister Pilate?

*Pause.*
PONTIUS PILATE

I don't recall.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You backpedaled because you knew it was wrong, didn't you?

PONTIUS PILATE

Romans don't have backpedals.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You knew Jesus was a Holy Man or a fool, but whatever he was, you believed him when he said that his Kingdom wasn't on Earth, didn't you?

PONTIUS PILATE

See, now, I don't recall that conversation.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You don't "recall" that conversation?! You know what, Mister Pilate, why don't you say that again so I can slap a perjury charge on you! You ordered the death of Christ — you and you alone — and then you pawned it off on Jesus's "reticence" and Judas's "impetuousness" and the "politics" of the Sanhedrin and the "rowdiness" of the Jewish people — is that not the case, Pontias Pilate?! Yes or No?!

PONTIUS PILATE

You can go on squawking if you want to — my conscience is clean. What you need to do is take it up with them Jews.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Mister Pilate, were the High Priests of Jerusalem authorized to order a death sentence?

PONTIUS PILATE

No they were not.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Was King Herod authorized to issue a death sentence?

PONTIUS PILATE

No he was not.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

How about the Jewish people themselves — were they free to issue death sentences at their whim and fancy?

PONTIUS PILATE

No.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

One man, Mister Pilate. In all of Judea, one man alone had the authority to put another man to death. Who was that man, Mister Pilate?

PONTIUS PILATE

Am I on trial here? 'Cuz lass time I checked, it was your client, Judas Iscariot, freezing his narrow ass off in the ninth Circle of Hell — not me!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

My client recanted with a remorseful heart and was ignored!

PONTIUS PILATE

Then you need to take that up with them Jews, not me. I mean, this ain't some new theory I'm introducing to ya! It's documented. Ain't no Sherlock Holmes/Nancy Drew Mystery here, lady: Them Jews was cantankerous. Ornery. They worshipped a Jealous, Angry, and Vengeful God — and guess what? Surprise, surprise: They was angry, jealous, and vengeful themselves. I never had a problem in Judea wasn't caused by some rabble-rousing, no-account Jew. Believe me, sister — you need to talk to them, not me.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

It's always the Jews, Mister Pilate, isn't it?

PONTIUS PILATE

Well, it sure as shit was in Judea, missy . . .

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You wanna know what I really think, Mister Pilate? I think this whole story about you hemming and hawing about what to do with Jesus is just a load of made-up crap written by Jewish Christian Evangelists seeking to broaden the appeal of the Jesus story to the Roman Empire. There is nothing that we know about you, Mister Pilate — absolutely nothing — that suggests for even a second that you would have even a passing hesitation about putting *any* Jew to death — let alone a revolutionary figure like Jesus who was being proclaimed the Messiah, who had entered the city of Jerusalem to crowds of cheering supporters, and who had the very next day incited a riot at the Temple. You hated your assignment, you hated Judea, and Mister Pilate, you hated Jews. Hated them. You hated the Jews because they contested you. You hated them because they fought back. You hated them because they clung to their religious beliefs and were willing to die for them. But most of all, I think,

you hated them because you knew they were stronger than you. I think that bothered you a great deal. I think, Mister Pilate, that it made you resentful and vengeful and furious. I think it made you feel small and inadequate. I think it gave you skin irritations and nervous tics. I think it kept you up nights and made you

count the days until you could return to the safe, bourgeois comfort of Rome. That's what I think. I think you're hiding behind historical inaccuracies and outright lies, Mister Pilate. I think that you're a liar and a fraud. I think that when Jesus was put before you, you did not see a God or a prophet, you did not see a lunatic or an innocent, you didn't even see a human being. I think, Mister Pilate, that what you saw before you that morning was just one more Jew, and you didn't hesitate. Why would you? . . . . . You didn't wash your hands, Pontius Pilate — History did it for you. Isn't that true?

PILATE *rises.*

PONTIUS PILATE

I think I've had enough here.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

If you were a man, Pilate — you'd own up to the truth!

PONTIUS PILATE

The truth?! Whose truth you talkin' about, Red? The truth is I was made a saint in the Ethiopian Church! The truth is I was named a martyr for the Christian Church in three-forty-eight A˙D˙ That's the damn "truth"!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

A Christian martyr?

PONTIUS PILATE

Did I stutter, girlie?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Well, I guess that's what they mean about History being "a lie agreed to."

PONTIUS PILATE

A "lie"?! Whatchu know about what's a lie and what's the truth?! Whatchu know about my history?! Alls you got to go on is some book written four different ways by four

different Jews wasn't even there in the first place! And whatchu know about my life *after* Palestine? Whatchu know about what I mighta did or didn't do when I got back home to the Motherland? Dass right — you don't know jack — do you? They didn't write down that part of the story, did they? Shit — I'm a tell you something: You and your presumptious nature reminds me more and more of my ex-wife Rhonda every minute — and believe me that ain't no compliment! Yes, I met that Jesus boy — seemed like a fine fellow! He dressed like a hobo and smelled like a goat, but give the boy a shave and a shower, and he woulda been basically all right. And I'll tell you something else: Unlike Judas, that Nazarene boy had character. He didn't come up on me begging and groveling — crying like a bitch. He faced me like a man, like a Roman almost, and that impressed me. I was willing to just have him be clubbed in his head for a coupla hours — redirect his youthful energies — but them Jews — they wasn't havin' none a that! You can say what you want to, think what you want to, but them Jews was fixin' to pitch a fit until that boy was served up for lunch like chicken in the skillet! And they had the numbers on us that weekend — two hundred thousand strong converging on the city for they High Holidays and ready to rumble at the drop! I did what I had to do to preserve the damn peace! Why?! 'Cuz that was my damn job! I did my job! I did my damn job and now you

wanna call me a liar?! Question my veracity and my character?! I am a Roman, lady! One hundred percent, 24/7, we never close! Underneath my ball sac is stamped: VERITAS! And that means TRUTH! And that means my honor is defined by my integrity and my integrity is defined by my truth! And I defy you — here and now — to produce one shred of evidence to support your wild and defamatory claims! Shit! You better check the résumé two times before

you start tryin' ta sweep your dirt under a Roman's rug! I am clean like Dove and Ready for Love, missy! I live in Heaven! Where you live at, girlfriend?! Shit! I'll tell you what, though: When you get your head straightened out, gimme a call some time if you want to — I'll take you down to the Aqueduct for a Pizza and a Tussle. Show you my tattoos . . . . . Any more questions?
FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I think, Mister Pilate, that you've told us all we need to know.

PONTIUS PILATE

Okay, then, I'm a roll out, now, boo — work on my short game.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

The witness is excused.

PONTIUS PILATE

*(strutting off magisterially)*

Hail Caesar, baby!

EL-FAYOUMY *rises.*

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Your Excellency! "Hedg-e-mon"! Just one question if I may?!

PONTIUS PILATE

What's that?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes . . . I wonder if you would tell the court — Hedge — the following: If indeed Judas Iscariot came to your tent to recant — and I'm not saying he did or didn't — and by the way, the only Gospel that says *anything* at all about Judas recanting is Matthew, so it's three against one and the one in question was not only a Greek, but a drunken Greek and a card cheat — but anyway — please tell us now if you will please: Good Sir, Hedge, when Judas came to your tent to allegedly recant, if in fact he did, which, I am in no way seeking confirmation of herewith, *HOWEVER*, if, by chance, the gin-soaked Greek was miraculously correct and Judas did in fact attempt to recant and return the tarnished silver, tell us please — *AND THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT* — Hedge: Did you get the sense or impression that Judas was

recanting out of a genuine *REMORSE* and concern for Jesus, *or* do you think he was seeking to undo the damage out of a neck-saving *fear* of the dire consequences and everlasting repercussions of betraying Our Rightful and most Exalted and Just Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of Man? . . .

*Beat.*

PONTIUS PILATE

I am a man — and defense counsel may dispute this — who happens to know something about Remorse — personal and otherwise. In my day, I stared into the eyes of perhaps ten thousand accused men and sat in judgment of them. I spared a few, and executed plenty. I sent people to face the whip, the cell, the gallows, and the cross. And I sent a few home, as well. Remorse is rare, but when you see it, it is unmistakable. Judas Iscariot had no Remorse — His Fear left no room for it. His Fear was one hundred percent Ego-Driven and Self-Serving. One hundred percent panic. Zero percent remorse. If you believe nothing else — believe that.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

"Hedge" — thank you. Thank you, indeed.

*The gavel bangs.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Next witness!

CUNNINGHAM *rises.*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, Defense reconjures Satan to the stand.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Lou, you can come in now . . . Bailiff! Go fetch him! Go fetch Satan!

BAILIFF

Alone?

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Go!

SATAN *enters, quite perturbed.*

Ah! . . . Have a seat, Lou.

SATAN

I want to file a formal fuckin' complaint, Frank!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Aw, this ain't about the turkey roll in the cafeteria again, now, is it, Lou?

SATAN

No, Frank, this is not about the turkey roll in the cafeteria. What this is about, Frank, is I recognized a couple of your court officers at the vending machines, okay? Ask me how I recognized them, Frank.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Lou —

SATAN

No! Don't you fuckin' "Lou" me — you little fag — God's been fuckin' *stealing souls* again, hasn't he?!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

El-Fayoumy! Escort the jury out!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Yes. Right this way, please.

SATAN

*(to* BUTCH, *as* EL-FAYOUMY *leads them out)*

And you! Honeywell! You're on my fuckin' list, hayseed — so don't expect any last-second reprieves. Shorts and tank tops, Stretch — pack light!

*They exit.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

This is unacceptable behavior, Lou.

SATAN

Don't tell me what's unacceptable — Those two court officers were mine, Frank — their souls in Hell, safe and secure! What? I don't got enough to contend with? — *now* I gotta deal with God cruisin' the barnyards of Hell poaching condemned poultry like some kind of silver-fox-tailed thief in the fuckin' night?? This is bullshit, Frank, and you know it — and I'm not leaving here this time without my satisfaction — so you better do something about it right fucking now!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Do something like what?

SATAN

Number One: I'm not testifying at any more of these circle jerks no more — I'm not some wind-up doll to be summoned and dismissed like a fuckin' toy. Number Two: I want two souls before I leave here today — so take a memo, and pass it on upstairs. I'll take you and whoever.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Me?

SATAN

Yeah, you. I shoulda claimed you off the dung heap after Lee's surrender . . . And I want some Darvon . . .

And a tall bourbon neat.

*(To CUNNINGHAM)*

What the fuck are you looking at?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I'd like to start my questioning.

SATAN

Why? You got some place you gotta be, dishrag?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

No. When you're done crying, just let me know.

SATAN

Um, I'm sorry — maybe you can clear this up for me — but is today "Fuck-With-Someone-Who-Can-Rip-YourHeart-Out-Through-Your-Miserable-Dried-Up-Cunt Day"? Is that what day this is? 'Cuz, unless I'm mistaken, I'm pretty sure that Today is not that Day.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Today is your day to answer my questions — when you're through behaving like a petulant child, that is.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Cunningham! Cunningham, I am directing you to hit the off-switch on them flapping gums of yours until further notice! And you, Lou, with all due respect to your stature and station — could ya cut me a break here, please?!

SATAN

Frank, I've always been good to you —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

— and I to you — is that not so? Now lissen: Your complaint is duly noted and will be kicked upstairs at the conclusion of today's testimony, okay? Now I need to call the damn jury back in here. And what I need to know — from the both of youse — is that when I move to do

so, that you two will conduct yourselves with a deportment in adjustment to the solemnity of these proceedings. Now, can I have your words on that?
FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I'm ready to proceed, Your Honor.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

With civility?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

If I'm met with civility.

SATAN

You know what, Cunningham? All those excuses you got wedged between that dubious cleavage of yours: your mother, the bulimia, the herpes, the booze, the abortions, the rape, the bipolar pharmaceutical adventures, the twin suicide attempts and the abject failures at every relationship you ever attempted — all those things do nothing to Band-Aid the simple fact that There Comes a Time When the World Stops Rewarding Potential — and when that time came for you, you threw yourself the world's biggest pity party and dedicated the rest of your short, pathetic, inconsequential life to finding fault everywhere fuckin' else but in the return gaze of your own cosmetically altered reflection. Okay?

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Satan, please — you are perhaps out of bounds here!

SATAN

El-Fayoumy, on a good day, your cock measures three and a half inches erect and it goes off on a hair trigger if you so much as sneeze . . . Worse than that, you're a Flatterer, and your Love of God is utterly false — as is your hair color. And the sole reason you're so hot for this nasty train wreck over here is because you're addicted to tragedy and punishment — not because you *think* you're a piece of shit, but because, El-Fayoumy, the truth is: Your self-diagnosis is correct: You're a bag of hot air and a weakling — and you will never, ever, be loved.

*(To CUNNINGHAM)*

You'll never be loved either, Cunningham, and that's because you're incapable of giving it — but you already knew that about yourself, didn't you?

*(To JUDGE)*

You can bring in the jury now, Frank. Never let it be said that the Prince of Tyre stood in the way of Truth.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*(To* SATAN *)*

No more outbursts.

SATAN

I'm a buddha floating on a lily pad.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

*(Calling out)*

El-Fayoumy — bring 'em on in!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Uh . . . Sir, yes, sir, sir!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

opens door. *(To jury)*

Take your seats, please — Do not tarry.

*Jury enters.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Counselor, you may begin.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Mister Satan —

SATAN

I apologize for my earlier behavior, counselor — I had some bad fish at lunch.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Mister Satan, you've had a long-standing feud with God, correct?

SATAN

No. I love God.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You love God?

SATAN

Very much. God made me.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Okay, you say God made you —

SATAN

God did make me — it says so in the Bible.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

I know about the Bible, Mister Satan. It also says in the Bible, in . . . in Matthew I believe. In Matthew, it, it says: "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit," correct?

SATAN

Correct.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

So are you saying that you are good? Or are you saying that God is bad?

SATAN

I would never say that God is bad.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

So, then, are you telling this court that you're good?

SATAN

I don't know — are you good, Counselor?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

That's not what I asked you!

SATAN

I'm sorry.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Just answer the question.

SATAN

I don't believe in Good and Bad. What I believe in is Truth.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Fine. According to Job and Nehemiah, God created you in the first three days. True?

SATAN

True.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You were an "Angel."

SATAN

True.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You were present when God created Earth.

SATAN

True.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Then God created man and gave *him — not you —* dominion over the Earth. True?

SATAN

True.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

You were, in fact, ordered by God to serve man. True?

SATAN

True.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

According to Genesis and Ezekiel, you then tempted Eve to eat the Apple in order to prove to God that He had made an error in giving Man dominion over the Earth. At which point, according to Luke, you then "fell from Heaven like lightning" and became God's Adversary. And ever since that day, you have competed for Souls with God in order to try to prove the point that Man is not worthy to rule over the Earth. Isn't that true, Mister Satan?!

SATAN

I don't compete with God. God competes with himself.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

That's not what I asked you.

SATAN

I'm trying to answer your question —

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

No, you are not trying to answer my question!

SATAN

Your Honor, I'm trying to form a response here —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Let him answer, Cunningham!

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

Your Honor, it does seem to me —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Quiet!

*(To* SATAN *)*

Proceed.

SATAN

Thank you. Look, I didn't make you people, God did, okay? But there was a design flaw in the creation: He gave you Free Will — and to balance that out, you were designed to *Self-Correct.* But, unlike the "Free-Will" muscle, the "Self-Correct" muscle is not a particular favorite of the *Homo sapiens.* I'd say *"Self-Correct"* falls somewhere between "Colonoscopy" and "Firing Squad" on most people's holiday "wish" lists. At any rate, the truth is: I don't have to actively compete for human souls — I don't have to lull or flatter or tempt or deceive — because with God at the helm and you people running around wreaking havoc: I'll be honest, I spend most of my time on a sofa watching one-hour dramas on HBO.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And what? Getting tossed out of Heaven — that didn't bother you at all?

SATAN

There's a concept, Cunningham, called Playing the Cards You Are Dealt — One can either accept that concept or one can slowly lose one's mind, heart, and soul. I'd like to be more helpful to you here, but really, that's what it all comes down to.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Is that so?

SATAN

I'm just a fallen angel tryin' ta keep my dick hard in a monotheistic society — anything else you wanna ask?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, this witness is clearly lying — I move that his entire testimony be stricken from the record.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

I'll not allow that, sorry — you conjured him, what comes out of his mouth is your responsibility.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But he's obviously lying!

SATAN

You oughta expand your consciousness, Counselor.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Unless you have another question, Cunningham, I suggest you step down now.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Forward or Back! You've been instructed, now what'll it be?

*A small beat.*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Why do you love God, Mister Satan?!

SATAN

What's not to love?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Specifically, Mister Satan! What specifically do you love about God?

SATAN

I don't know where to begin.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Pick a spot!

SATAN

I love God because He is All-Powerful and All-Forgiving. I love God because his Justice is perfect. I love God because God loves me.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

God loves you?!

SATAN

Very much. Gift basket at Christmas — Hallmark Greetings on all the major holidays.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Stop it! If God loves you, then why did he throw you out of his Kingdom?!

SATAN

He didn't throw me out — I left.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

That's not what it says in the Bible!

SATAN

Yeah, they fudged that part, you're right — but that's because you people really only respond to fear and threat — If they told you straight up that there was no lock to the Gates of Heaven, then you'd have no incentive at all to even try to be halfway decent.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

In other words, God lied!

SATAN

God didn't write the Bible — you do know that, right?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Of course I know that!

SATAN

Then why would you say that God lied?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Mister Satan — does God love Judas Iscariot? Yes or No?!

SATAN

God loves everybody.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

And yet Judas is in Hell — so what use is God's Love to Judas if my client is allowed to languish in Damnation?

SATAN

Your client is free to leave whenever he wants to — in fact, I wish he would — I could use the room.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

That's not true and you know it!

SATAN

Look, maybe you should sit down and catch your breath —

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

— The real truth is that God's Love for us is Conditional — isn't that right?! You failed to meet God's conditions, and he threw you in the trash! Judas failed — and he's in a catatonic stupor!

SATAN

Your client succumbed to Despair —

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Yes! And if Human Despair is so powerful as to render God powerless over it, then what does that say about God?! It says one of two things, Mister Satan: Either God's not All-Powerful and therefore useless — or — God's Love is Conditional, which renders that Love false and Unworthy! Which one is it?!

SATAN

Cunningham, please don't take this personally, but your father never really loved you or wanted you, right? And the only reason your mother didn't abort you was because she was afraid of scarring — I think she told you that once, didn't she —

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Mister Satan! —

SATAN

— Just because your parents resented you doesn't mean that God does.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

— Mister Satan, I asked you a direct question and I am demanding from you a direct answer!

SATAN

The direct answer is that you are completely wrong.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Is God Powerless or Spiteful — I am ordering you to answer!

SATAN

*(not unkindly)*

You're powerless and spiteful, Cunningham — not God.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor, he's not answering!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Whaddya want me to do about it?

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But he's not answering!

SATAN

Open your heart to God, Cunningham.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Shut up!

*(To* JUDGE *)*

Your Honor?!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

I suggest you step down, Cunningham.

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But I'm not finished!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Then finish!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But Your Honor, this isn't fair!

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

It is what it is, Cunningham!

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

But Your Honor —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Cunningham —

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

Your Honor —

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

What, Cunningham? What?

*Pause.*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

*(To* SATAN *)*

You're a fuckin' liar!!

SATAN

I'm truly sorry you feel that way.

*Pause.*

FABIANA AZIZA CUNNINGHAM

. . . . . Nothing further.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

El-Fayoumy: Cross?

EL-FAYOUMY *surveys* CUNNINGHAM, *then* SATAN, *then back to* CUNNINGHAM.

YUSEF EL-FAYOUMY

No cross. No.

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

You're excused.

SATAN

Thanks, Frank.

*(To the lawyers)*

Counselors: You availed yourselves as expected. And by the way, El-Fayoumy, you're completely wrong, too. I'll be in touch.

*And he is gone.*

JUDGE LITTLEFIELD

Next witness!

*Blackout. A beat.*

JESUS *makes his way to* JUDAS. *He speaks to us.*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Right now, I am in Fallujah. I am in Darfur. I am on Sixty-third and Park having dinner with Ellen Barkin and Ron Perelman . . . Right now, I'm on Lafayette and Astor waiting to hit you up for change so I can get high. I'm taking a walk through the Rose Garden with George Bush. I'm helping Donald Rumsfeld get a good night's sleep . . . I was in that cave with Osama, and on that plane with Mohamed Atta . . . And what I want you to *know* is that your work has barely begun. And what I want you to *trust* is the efficacy of divine love if practiced consciously. And what I need you to *believe* is that if you hate who I love, you do not know me at all. And make no mistake, "Who I Love" is every last one. I *am* every last one. People ask of me: Where are you? Where are you? . . . Verily I ask of you to ask yourself: Where are *you?* Where are *you?*

Judas.

*No response.*

Judas.

*Beat.* JUDAS *slowly emerges from his frozen state of catatonia.*

JUDAS ISCARIOT

. . . . . Who's that?

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Is it ever anybody else, Judas?

*Pause.*

I miss you.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Uh-huh.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I miss you, Judas.

JESUS *lays a hand on him.*

JUDAS ISCARIOT

*DON'T FUCKIN' TOUCH ME!*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Judas.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

*I SAID TAKE YOUR FUCKIN' HANDS OFF ME — TAKE 'EM OFF!*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I'm sorry. I'm —

JUDAS ISCARIOT

*— JUST BACK OFF MY GRILL, MAN! BACK OFF!*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I'm sorry.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

*BACK OFF MORE!*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I'm sorry.

*Pause.*

JUDAS ISCARIOT

If a thousand strangers spit on me and kick me as they pass, I will smile. But if the brother of my heart gives me only a passing hard look, then, Judas — I will not sleep that night, nor sleep — at all — till he will let me love him again.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

*NO!!*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

No, what?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

No more fuckin' fortune cookies, that's what! You wanna say something, I can't stop you — you wanna

apologize, fine, apologize and go, just — for once — speak like a normal fuckin' person!
JESUS OF NAZARETH

I'm not a normal person, Judas, and I'm not here to apologize. I am who I am and not what you demand me to be. I'm always going to be who I am and what I am, and when have you ever heard me deliver my message any differently, Judas? When?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I . . . Just, go away.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I won't go away.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Well, that'd be a first.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I have never gone away, Judas . . . Look at me.

JUDAS *does.*

I love you, Judas. And all I want — all I want — is to be not just near you — but *with* you.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Shoulda thought of that before.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Before what?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Just get the fuck outta here, okay?

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Judas —

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Don't fuckin' Judas me — *You're not wanted here*, okay, Mister Fuckin'-Above-It-All?!

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I'm not above it all — I'm right here in it, don't you see that?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

*And don't you get that I don't fuckin' care?!*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

You think your suffering is a one-way street?! It's not! It's the exact opposite of not!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

You got a lot of fuckin' nerve —

JESUS OF NAZARETH

— and you've got no nerve at all! Where's your *heart* in all this, Judas? You think you were with me for any other reason than that?! It was your heart, Judas. You were *all heart.* You were my heart! Don't you know that?!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I'll tell you what I know: I watched you trip over your

own dusty feet to heal the sick, the blind, the lame, the unclean — *any two-bit stranger stubbed their fuckin' toe!* When some lowly distant relative — too cheap to buy enough wine for his own fuckin' wedding — suddenly runs out of booze — no problem, you just "presto change-o" — *and it was fuckin' Miller time in ol' Canaan again, wasn't it, bro?! But when I fuckin' needed you — where the fuck were you, huh?!*
JESUS OF NAZARETH

Judas —

JUDAS ISCARIOT

You forgave Peter and bullshit Thomas — you knocked Paul of Tarsus off a horse — you raised Lazarus from the *fuckin' dead* — but me? Me? Your "heart"? . . . *What about me??!! What about me, Jesus?! Huh?!* You

just, you just — I made a mistake! And if that was wrong, then you should have told me! And if a broken heart wasn't sufficient reason to hang, *THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME THAT, TOO!*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Don't you think . . . that if I knew that it would have changed your mind . . . that I would have?

*Pause.*

JUDAS ISCARIOT

All I know is that you broke me unfixable — and that I'm here . . . And, you wanna know when you delivered your message differnetly? At the Temple, Jesus — that's when. And you were beautiful there. And you left there three inches taller. And we all saw it. I loved you. That's all I did. And that's the truth. And now I'm here.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Judas — What if I were to tell you that you are not here? That you are with me in my Kingdom even now, and that you have been there since the morning of my Ascension and that you have never left?

JUDAS *spits in* JESUS *'s face.*

JUDAS ISCARIOT

That's what I think about you.

JESUS *doesn't wipe it off.*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I love you, Judas.

*Pause.*

I love you.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

*Just stop!*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Don't you see me here, Judas?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

*I see a lot of things!*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

You see alotta things?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

*That's right!*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

How about him? Do you see him?

SATAN *appears.*

Do you know him? Call unto him. Touch him. He is not there. Because he does not exist, Judas. Rather, they must conjure him, and still he is but a vapor blown away by a hummingbird's breath. He is false. He is a lie. He is not real. Touch him. Go ahead.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I don't wanna touch him.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Stand up, Judas.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

You know I can't do that!

JESUS OF NAZARETH

No. What I know — is that you can.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Get the fuck over yourself!

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Will you feed my lambs, Judas? . . . Will you take care of my little sheep? . . . Will you feed my lambs?!

JUDAS ISCARIOT

"Feed your lambs"?

JESUS OF NAZARETH

You know exactly what I'm asking you.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Go away!

JESUS OF NAZARETH

If you don't love me, Judas — then you're gonna have to look me in my eyes and say it.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I don't love you.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

If you don't love me, then why are you here?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Go!

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Judas! . . . Judas, don't you know what would happen the very instant you got down on your knees?

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Why on my knees? They shoulda buried me standing up — 'cuz I been on my knees my whole life! You left me.

JUDAS *is slowly reverting to his frozen catatonic state.*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I'm right here.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I would have never believed that you could have left me.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I never left you.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

That you didn't love me.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I do love you.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Why . . . didn't you make me good enough . . . so that you could've loved me?

JESUS OF NAZARETH

. . . Please take my hands, Judas. Please.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Where are they?

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Right here.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I can't see them.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

They're right here.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

*Where are you going?!*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I'm right here.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

*Don't leave me!*

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I'm here.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I can't hurt . . .

JESUS OF NAZARETH

I love you, Judas.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I can't . . .

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Please stay.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I can't hurt . . .

JESUS OF NAZARETH

Please love me, Judas.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

I can't.

JUDAS *is frozen again.*

*A long beat.*

BUTCH HONEYWELL *enters* JUDAS' *s lair with a twelve-pack of Canadian beer.* BUTCH *looks around, clears his throat, takes off his cap.*

BUTCH HONEYWELL

Um, uh, Mister Iscariot? Uh, Mister Iscariot, I, uh, I don't know if you can hear me, but, I just — I just wanted to introduce myself, if, if I could. I'm, uh, Butch Honeywell. I was the foreman of the jury at your trial there . . . and . . . well, we found you guilty, Mister Iscariot . . . I'm real sorry about that . . . Oh, uh . . . I brought you a twelve-pack of beer. Actually, guess it's a five-pack now, but, anyway . . . Here. I don't know if you drink beer, but it's good stuff . . . Anyways, I'll just set it down right beside you right here . . . Okay then.

BUTCH *goes to leave, then stops.*

. . . So . . . I think I'm dead, Mister Iscariot, and, I'm a little concerned about that 'cuz I don't think my soul's ready for judgment, but nobody else has so far corroborated that I'm dead so, I just don't bring it up, but, the fact is that if this is a dream, it's the longest damn dream I've ever endured — and really, I just . . . I really miss my wife, Mister Iscariot. Is it okay if I tell you that?

*Beat.* BUTCH *pops a beer. Sips. Pause.*

I remember, I was with these two girls that night, when I first seent my wife, Mister Iscariot. It was a party at Jimmy Rayburn's house 'cuz Jimmy's momma worked till midnight so he had the house to himself, and, you know, me and these two girls — Suzie Heller and Della Mae Robbins — we were just talkin', smokin' cigarettes, out on Mrs˙ Rayburn's deck away from the party. I was depressed over sumpthin' or other — prolly 'cuz school was ending — plus I had just been in the school play — I had played Tom in *The Glass Menagerie* — it was the first time I had ever acted, and everyone said I was real good. But now, the play was over, and school was almost over, and, for the part in the play, they had given me this real short haircut — like 1940s style — and my ears, Mister Iscariot, I don't know if you can notice, but, they stick out a little bit, so, with the short haircut and all, I was feeling a little self-conscious and dumb, and, anyway, just not too cheery . . . So anyways, I'm out there on the deck talkin' to Suzie and Della — and all a the sudden I see this girl inside at the party. She had, I guess, just arrived, and she had on a red jacket. It was a cheerleading jacket from the high school just across the state line in Virginia — The Red Raiders — and I remember, all I saw was blonde hair, and a red jacket, and this smile that was — even from a distance — just kinda electrifying to the heart, ya know? 'Bout a minute later, the sliding door to the deck opens, and this girl, she comes out by herself, and she's heading towards us — turns out she's friends with Della from back in the day, from, I don't know, Girl Scouts, Brownies, sumpthin' like that. Anyways, she walks over — and she was so beautiful, that I remember thinkin' to myself — and this is exactly word for word what I thought — "I ain't even gonna bother talkin' to this girl." So she comes over, says hello, and I just excuse myself right off the deck and head back inside,

fixin' ta say my "good-byes" and skedaddle . . . And anyways, I try to leave, but then, Jimmy handed me a beer, and someone else started passin' a bottle of Rebel Yell, and before you know it, you know, bong hits and whatnot, and anyways a little later I'm sittin' on the couch when this girl — my future wife — she just comes up to me by herself and she says: "I saw you in that play the other night. You made me cry" . . . Two days later, we went out on a date . . . On the way back, I was driving her home, and we passed by this house where my friend Dave Hoghe used to live who had died . . . I hadn't been by his house since he passed. The family didn't live there no more. But when I saw the house, I got struck with this feeling, and I asked her if she wouldn't mind if we just pulled up in front of that house and just sat for a moment. She said: "Sure." So I parked, and we just sat in the car for a while. Quiet. Not sayin' nothin'. And before I knew it, Mister Iscariot, I

was tearing up — 'cuz this kid, he had been a real good friend of mine, ya know — and then, I just started crying, Mister Iscariot. I couldn't help myself and I couldn't shut it off. And I was real embarrassed, and she just, she just held me while tears and snot and whatnot just poured outta me and onto her little white sweater . . . And she didn't mind about that . . . She didn't mind at all . . . At some point, I drove her home, and we got to her door, and we started to kiss, and, well, God, it was like, I'll tell ya — it was like peaches and dynamite . . . And before I left, I apologized to her about the crying and all, and she said: "Don't be a jackass, Butch Honeywell," and I smiled, but then I went on to explain my meaning, which was — you know — if you want a girl to think you're sensitive or something, then maybe taking her to the house of your dead friend and crying all over her pretty white sweater might be a good way to pull it off, and, you know what

she said, Mister Iscariot? . . . She looked at me for a good long while with them all the way dazzling eyes of hers and then she just said: "Well, if it was a trick . . . then I'm tricked" . . . . . Three years into our marriage, I took a job teaching at the State College — I was popular with the students 'cuz I found a way to make 'em wanna learn. One night, at the end of the semester, they took me out for beers. I ended up havin' an assignation with one of the coeds — young lady named Lucy. And I went home that night, got into bed next to my wife drunk as a skunk and I remember, before I passed out, I was lookin' at her. I always liked to look at her when she was sleeping 'cuz she always looked so good. I had a little nickname for her, I useta call her "my little baby dinosaur," 'cuz that's how she looked like when she slept — like one of those cute cartoon little baby dinosaurs — like a little brontosaurus, but cute . . . Anyways, when I woke up the next mornin', she was still sleepin', and what I had done the night before came back to me, and I looked at my wife, and, boy, she looked exactly the same as always, but, somehow, she just wasn't my little baby dinosaur no more, ya know? And she woke up, and she didn't know nuthin' 'bout nuthin', and everything was exactly the same as if the night before had never happened, except, it wasn't the same, and I knew it. And I had no idea why I had done what I done. But I had done it. And it couldn't be changed. My girl, she got up and fixed blueberry French toast with maple walnut pecans. I didn't eat it. No way I coulda eaten it. Nuthin' was ever the same after that morning, Mister Iscariot, ya know? I tried a lot of things to make it better, the only thing that did was more beer and women . . . Do you know who W˙ H˙ Auden was, Mister Iscariot? W˙ H˙ Auden was a poet who once said: "God may reduce you on Judgement Day to tears of shame, reciting by

heart the poems you would have written, had your life been good" . . . She was my poem, Mister Iscariot. Her and the kids. But mostly . . . her . . . You cashed in Silver, Mister Iscariot, but me? Me, I threw away Gold . . . That's a fact. That's a natural fact.

*A long beat.*

JESUS *sighs, takes off his shirt, plunges it in the bucket, rinses it, and begins to wash* JUDAS *'s feet.* JESUS *washes meticulously and with care. He washes. And washes. Perhaps the water is mixed with tears.*

*Lights fade.*

*The end*